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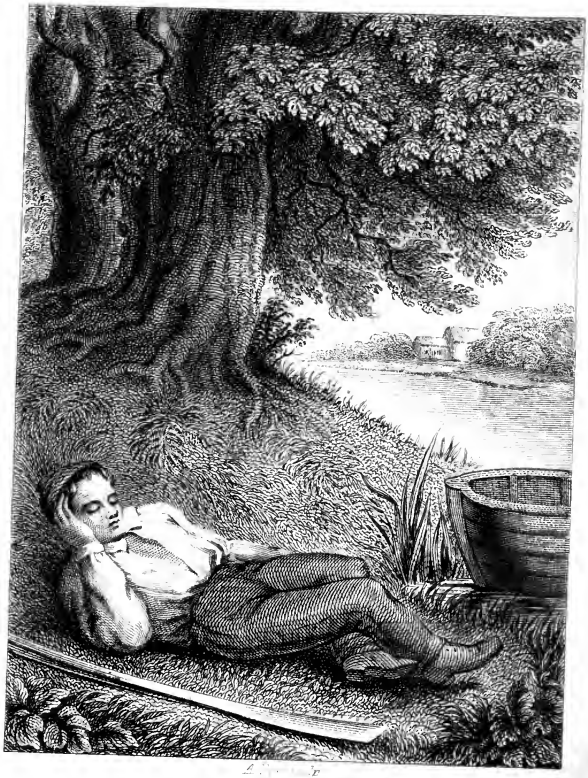

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A

SUMMER'S-DAY DREAM

WITH OTHER POEMS

BY

HENRY FRANCIS ROBINSON

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LONDON
WILLIAM PICKERING
1853

TO THE MEMORY OF

GEORGE RICHARD ROBINSON Esq.

LATE CHAIRMAN OF LLOYDS, AND MEMBER FOR

THE TOWN OF POOLE,

IN COMMEMORATION OF HIS GREAT TALENTS

AND HIGH PRINCIPLE,

AS WELL IN THE POLITICAL AS

COMMERCIAL WORLD,

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

BY HIS SON

H. F. R.

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INTRODUCTORY POEM.

I.

THE Poet's mind, of noble mould,
As Poets ought to be,
Far more than all the dross of gold,
Loves Nature's beauty:

II.

Cares little for the pomp of place,
As long as skies are blue;
Nor joins in mad ambition's race,
Though he's ambitious too.

III.

He hides a still expectancy
Of what is called renown,
Tho' ne'er his simple legacy
May to the world go down.

IV.

He hears the footsteps that were cast
By those, upon the ground,
Whose lives were noble in the Past—
Hoping that *his* sound.

V.

But after all Posterity
Doth reap the seed of Fame,
For never heard Mortality
In death, its echoed name:

VI.

And that by which the Poet gains
Is *real good* that's done;
Some heart that full of bitter stains
He may perchance have won.

VII.

If any read, when he's long dead,
His pages afterward,
And, sorrowing, should feel comforted,
He has his best reward.

VIII.

If such should be this volume's fate
I ask for nothing more,
But meekly, patiently await
What Time may have in store.

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A SUMMER'S-DAY DREAM.

MORN.

I.

THE day is just at break—a summer's day!
As fair a one, methinks, as can be sent;
Though many suns ere this have brightly risen,
And long, it may be, ere the world grows old,
Long—ere the last morn comes. Hark! how the cock
Crows forth his boldest note, as if he would
With strength of lung uprouse the flagging sun,
And summon him above.—Old Chanticleer!
Oft have I heard thy shrill-toned voice, and long'd
That it might choke thee, through the tedious hours
Of fever'd sickness, when the spirit asks
Nought but oblivion. And then indeed
I do confess to have abused thee well—
Denounced thee as a foul conspirator,
That merely wished to trouble our repose,
And, like a cursed sprite, strip off the veil

2

Of darkness from our woes—But now thy chant
Comes musically as a fresh-toned bell:
I do believe thou art an honest bird,
That crowest chiefly from the love of light,
And would'st not let the sleeping lose the prize
Of the first blush of morn.—Such slaves are we
To all our mortal humours—so we pass—
As changing weathers paint the rolling year—
From grave to gay, from mirth to sorrow's mood,
From calm contentment to impatient ire,
Upon the merest ache or change of blood—
Our last drawn breath our only equal one.
But it is folly to begin this strain
At such a cheerful time; the day's too young
To moralize as yet.—Old Chanticleer!
I cannot let thee pass with me the gate,
But thou must get thee to thy yard, and there
Crow bravely on, till all the world awake.
Some other time I'll listen to thy song:
Just now my pulse is good—the day is fine:
I'm bound upon a rambling holiday—
And am in haste to be among the fields,
And the green woods beyond—so fare thee well!

II.

What a sweet hour is this!—how quiet too!
Yet how instinct with sense of coming life!
How bracing to the lungs the buoyant air!

How softly springs the turf to meet the step!
And, as I pass, the flow'rets brush me by,
And, shaking all their sorrows to the ground,
Breathe salutation from their scented lips.
On every side the meadows rise so fresh
And greenly paved, that I could well nigh think,
All through the night some elfin tribe had work'd,
Fresh-carpeting the Earth. From leaf and hedge
In trembling globes the dew-drops clustering hang,
And at the slightest touch come showering down,
Spangling the grass like stars, as if to show
'Twas here the Fairies revell'd through the night,
And in their haste to vanish with the moon,
Their watery gems toy-like threw all aside.
The stream comes murmuring through the silent fields,
Like music in a desert, and leaps on
As fresh this morn as if it just had left
Its mountain home, and with its current bore
Some merry tale down to a lonely sea.
Along the banks the graceful poplars nod,
Familiarly like friends—the willow-trees
Glass their long leaves, and, in the coming breeze,
Bend gently down, until their branches seem
To kiss the rippling surface, and thus make
Their rustic toilette for the opening day.
No sound but song is in the tranquil skies,
And there the lark, leaving his still warm nest,
Skims through the airy seas. In the far east
The cold gray light perceptibly has warm'd

Into a richer hue; the long black clouds,
That in the bosom of the night had slept,
Have one by one left sullenly the skies,
Like warriors a lost field :—a single star,
Like a lone watch-fire glimmers for awhile,
Then vanishes away,—not yet the sun
Dares show his golden forehead to the world,
As if, ere venturing on his full, bright course,
He would first see, what mischief the long night
And ugly dreams had done; but soon a gleam
Of bolder light shoots from the watchful east,
Belting the dark horizon with pure gold,
And, like a flaming courier, signals on
The travelling of Day. One minute more—
The sun appears resplendent like a god,
And vaults as nimbly to his chariot seat,
As youth into the saddle of ambition:
The mountain tops, peak after peak, light up,
Like sentinels at arms; below, the lake
Glistens like waves of silver, and the skies
With richer light blush to their virgin brow,
Like beauty colouring at the tale of love.
Thus, at the last, full-shining in its pride,
Dissolving mist to dew, and clouds to air,
The long expected day rolls perfect forth,
Deep, clear, and azure,—beautiful and young,
Just like the breaking of an infant sea
Upon a new-born world.

III.

Of all the seasons that roll round the year,
Of all the hours that usher down the day,
I love the summer, and a summer's morn.
It is a matchless pleasure then, methinks,
To walk the early world, and, as it were,
At the half-open gate of dawn to lean,
Ourselves alone abroad—when not a sound,
Save some far echo, or the lark's shrill note,
Stirs through the morning air; when on the skirts
Of the horizon, a few tintless clouds
Still linger half-withdrawn, or half-asleep;
And through the world, all motionless around—
Brooks, meadows, trees, the far-off lakes and hills—
The pulse of Nature is not still, but beats
Inaudibly—save to the heart alone.
The quietude enchanting of this hour
Is not the calm of melancholy eve,
Or of a tempest's lull at cloudy noon;
But one more striking, sensibly profound,
More joyous and exhilarating far—
A calm of animation which, like sleep,
Doth make repose most beautiful—a still,
Yet universal longing at the heart
Of Nature for her universal sire:
As if the sun his herald-beams had sent
On tiptoe to the yet-hush'd world, and breathed
A love of light ere yet the light had come.

Far down the valleys while our footsteps roam
The mist still hangs, like perspiration's glow
Upon a slumbering brow; and so profound,
So beautiful their rest, that we can scarce
Believe that it will break, and all things there.
As in the hollow cradle of the world,
Seem dreaming a long sleep; but where we leave
The vales behind, and mount the eastern hills,
Whose glowing tops just kiss the rising sun—
Parting the crimson curtains of the skies,
Then comes the morn apparell'd to our gaze
With all the splendour of a jewell'd bride,
And weds her blushing spirit unto ours:
A tide of keen, invigorated health
O'erfloods us at the heart; we seem to be
Incorporated with her rise—to meet
Half-way her advent on the mount—to feel
Each faculty expanding as she grows
In growing beauty, and from light to light;
And for the first time, as it were, to love
Existence for its own sake, and exult
In all the glorious privilege of being.
So young and innocent the time then seems—
So still the settled world,—so fresh the breeze—
So won the eye with beauty half-reveal'd—
And so complete the solitude around,
That all things date from yesterday, become
A new creation, and we roam along
As our first parents did in paradise.
The sky that roofs us has a faint, young light,

As if it were reluctant to shut out
The view of heaven beyond.
Where we meet
The babbling brook, imperfectly to us
Like a young child it talks; the just-born breeze
Sweeps like a joyous spirit by, and sings—
"In the still breathing of her first taught prayer
Nature may now be heard;"—her very cheek
Through the soft air seems resting on our own,
Her sweet breath answering ours; and as we pass
From hill to hill, and watch the wide world round
Spring like a living picture into life—
Some rich cloud forming in the summer air—
Some woodland height just towering to life—
Some distant spire darting to the sky—
Some river glancing in the sun, and like
A sudden smile illuminating Earth—
Our spirits altogether are won o'er
To the sweet influence of the scene and hour;
The freshest feelings of the heart are stirr'd,
And, like a new-found spring, come welling up:
Time's rapid wheel rolls round a backward turn,
And we are once more children as at first:
Our leaden years as gently on us weigh,
As on the river's breast the sunbeams dance;
Our souls are full of music as the lark,—
As free from care as is the breeze we drink;
All things we see are preaching happiness;
Our hearts within are innocent and pure,
And all around us young.

IV.

Oh! that this freshness of the heart could last—
This feeling of expansion and of peace!
Why, as the day declines, must we too lose
The new-born sense of renovated youth,
And happiness complete? and as the world
Each hour older grows, why do we seem
To grow in spirit older with it too?
Why does the pageant of the setting sun
Stir memory to sadness, and the clouds,
Which gather at departing day, seem tinged
With reminiscent glories that lead back,
As in a fairy bark, the time-worn heart,
Down to a younger land? Why do we pause,
And startle at the shadows of our years,
Fast gathering round us, like autumnal leaves
Strewn on deserted shores? or oftentimes
Gaze from the dreary solitude of age
Into the backward past, until our eyes
Fill with regretful tears;—as we may watch
From off the stern of some swift-gliding bark
A loved, familiar coast, whose outline long
Retains our aching sight, until it dips
Below the rising wave, and henceforth has
To us existence but in memory?
'Tis not that man's progression is all vain
From childhood upward; it is not alone
That after-knowledge brings a sense of pain—

Nor is it either that we do regret
Youth and its fleeting pleasures: but it is
That the old labourer Time, since first we sprung
Into the world's broad garden, has not ceas'd,
Upon the virgin soil of our pure hearts,
To work inaudibly; that from our brows
The golden seal of purity is gone,
And from our lips the breath of innocence.
We are not what we were, for we have pass'd
The world's deep Rubicon, and have stemm'd
Its battle-tide—perhaps manfully, yet come
Not altogether stainless from the fight:
And ere we sleep, and lay our armour by,
Leaving the watch to others, we desire
That it might be all burnish'd and all bright,
To stand the great inspection, and the sound
Of that death-stirring trumpet, which again
To living ranks shall wake the slumbering dust
Of every human warrior that has trod
This universal battle-field of sin.
It is this heart-felt yearning and desire,
Experienced mostly in our later age,
Which, when we turn to gaze on Nature's face
And share in her repose, so often dim
Her own sweet beauty with our rising tears:
For then do we remember, on our brows
What earthly stains must rest, as we face hers;—
How dark the pilgrimage of life has been,
Compared to the pure flow of her own years!
It is this self-same yearning too, when night,

Star-letter'd, as with God's own history,
Reveals to meditation its bright page,
That makes us turn sometimes from our dark homes
To those unfading lights, and feel within
A melancholy repining and regret,
That never thus can we surrender up—
So pure, so stainless, lustrous and undimm'd,
The life within us that has briefly burnt;
And, that of all our after memories,
Through the deep gloom of death, not one may shine
So bright, so constant, and so beautiful.
The great convulsions of the moral world—
The saddest heir-looms of humanity—
The stings of poverty, or the wreck of health—
The rude wind of misfortune, and the chill
Of parting friends, or cankering of care—
All these indeed may tell their tale, and plant
Autumnal tints upon our summer leaves,
Or shake the blossoms from our laden boughs,
But in themselves are all too powerless
To sap the broad trunk of integrity,
Or reach the immortal spirit which within
Blooms ever verdant when all else is dead.—
This is of life's experiment the truth
And lesson most sublime—and self-regret—
The only sorrow that can quite subdue
The heart with its own gall, and on the walls
Of our clay habitations write the signs
Of God's confusion, when all else without
Is full of love, of harmony and peace.

V.

Here let me pause, ere yonder bridge I reach,
And mark at leisure this enchanting view.—
Here, far before me, spreads a natural dell,
Whose hollow windings pleasantly invite
All footsteps there with a most silent charm.
On either side the banks abruptly slope
Into a deep ravine, o'er-arched above
By boughs of trees so intricately wove,
That altogether as I gaze, the sense
Of daylight is quite gone, and I am lost
In the dark-netted foliage of this glen,
As in a world where sunlight never comes.
Beneath these drooping boughs, and firmly clasp'd
Within the narrow gorge, a silver stream
Winds slowly on as if it were most loath
To leave the beauties of its forest home:
From every side umbrageous shadows pour
Down on the wave, which even seems to bend
With their faint weight, and ever as it flows,
To gain a pace more tranquil, and at last,
Within the cradle of some dark recess,
To lose itself in sleep—yet further on,
Where stray beams drop thro' intermitting boughs,
The stream again appears, and mocks the sight
By winding ever, when it seems quite lost—
The dark, mysterious openings of the glen—
The shadows of all shades which dance upon

The wave, in shapes fantastical, as if
They were the sprites familiar to the spot,—
The net-like roof of over-hanging boughs,
Thro' which the light scarce comes, or when it does,
Breaks thro' the cooling leaves with darken'd ray,—
The silence and the solitude profound,
Which seems to shut out all the world beside,
And make all life beyond a fabled thing,—
The stream's perpetual and yet scarce-seen flow
Which images Eternity itself—
All these combine to fill this quiet scene
With such poetic beauty, that the heart,
Outstripping the swift eye, doth yearn at once,
To penetrate the mystery that it feels
Is hidden here, and leaving all things else
To follow up the windings of this stream
Far, far away, wherever it may lead,—
On explorations endless, and in search
Of some sweet land of beauty all unknown.
Oh! what an emblem too is there of peace,
In this sequester'd, echoless, deep dell,—
Of that unruffled and eternal calm,
Which, Phœbus-like, for ever we pursue,
And which, like Daphne, ever flies our grasp.
Day after day has here unnoticed flown,
Dial'd by tranquil shadows, and the songs
Of birds melodious, as in beauteous round,
The Lark unto the Nightingale gave way,
The Nightingale unto the Lark, again:
The woods, spring-kiss'd, have leap'd into the bud,—

The bud has ripen'd to the summer leaf,—
The dry leaf fall'n soundless to the sod,
On calm autumnal nights, or borne perhaps
Upon the wave away, and thus the years
In sweet succession have bloom'd forth and died.
For ever here has this stream flow'd the same;
The life of these still waters ever been
Most musical, as from the first they were;
Whether the morning's freshness has pierced
through
The mist of their sweet slumbers, or the sun
Slept through the noon-day on their dreamy wave,
Or, through the mystic periods of the night,
The moonlight floated like a silver shell.

How pleasant would it be could I embark,
Foregoing all realities of life,
Without a pilot, and without a sail,
Upon a long, long voyage on this stream:—
For ever and for ever to glide down
Its placid current in a lazy bark,—
For ever and for ever, from the woods,
To hear the sounds of sweetest life outpour—
The pheasant springing on its gorgeous wings,
The timid hare scarce rustling in the brake,
Or swift deer pausing in their course to drink,
And glassing thus their antlers in the wave.
For ever and for ever, on the shores
To see all nature changing, as I passed—
The banks of emerald grow to frowning rocks,

The softest beauty into scenes sublime.
For ever and for ever, to hear break
Against the boat, the current's rippling wave,
Like sweetest music; and thus gliding on
With spirit listless, and with half-shut eyes,
Most sweet it were at times to fall asleep
Beneath the shade of some o'erhanging cloud,
And dream for ever as I slept, until
Methought my bark was to a sea-shell turn'd,
The stream flow'd on as through some Grecian land,
And all the melodies that around me pour'd
Seem'd, as of yore, to come from those old gods,
And intermediate spirits, which were wont,
'Mid the poetic Greeks, in fabled times
To haunt the earth, and consecrate it thus
With natural divinity.

VI.

But hark!
My soul from its sweet reverie is roused
By the loud roar of waters, which beneath
This narrow bridge, dash on with foaming wreaths,
And music hollow, plaintive and profound,
Like a bewailing spirit with a song
Of everlasting sadness on its lips.
Alas! that consciousness so beautiful,
And spirit kindred to humanity,
Which we to nature would ascribe—the power

Of sympathy with man, and the frail sense
Of those emotions common to his heart—
All these indeed are but creations sweet
Of the poetic brain; but still therein
Doth lie a truth most evident, in that
They prove man's desolation, if not her's:
For Nature has no need of senses frail;
Her spirit is omnipotent to guide,
And regulate herself to her own ends;
No use hath she of lamentable sounds,
To mourn for her creations, as all these
Are perfect and proportionate to kinds
Of beauty or of good, and wherein most
Nature resembles man, in that she bears
The stamp of change, of death, or of decay,
Herein has she a compensative power,
Most perfectly and purely all her own;
Within her breast she bears the gift divine
Of life's elixir, and can ever more
Her golden seasons bring back from the past,
As though they ne'er had died; she can reclothe
The barren hills with verdure; she can give
Unto the young bride—spring, her wedding gift
Of leaves and flowers as beautiful and fresh
As those of last year's growth; in autumn's lap
Can pour its mellow'd fruits, and to the brook
Parch'd with the summer heat restore again
Its sweetly-flowing waters: in all things
Is Nature able to rebuild her life
With beauty as before: to grace her lips

With one undying song—her brow with peace;
And her long train of endless years to make
One spring of youth—returning evermore.
Alas! how different is the life of man!
For him indeed, oh! never more for him!
Can come back the old faith of early days;—
The hallow'd dream of life, the heart's best prime,
The first—the freshest—and impassion'd age,
When the young spirit soaring, like a lark,
From opening childhood to expanding youth,
All things it saw, or felt, or seem'd to feel,
Inflamed with its own beauty, as the sun
Enamels Nature with its own rich light;
For every tear could weave a rainbow's arch,
And throw o'er all futurity's deep gloom
A borealis luminous and bright,
Converting earth to one wide paradise.
For him no more, when once the bitter sense
Of desolation, like a wintry wind,
Has swept upon his hearth, and all things made
Cold, dark, and comfortless, can there be found
A sweet elixir to restore again
The well-beloved beings of the past,
And those familiar shadows which were wont,
At dusk of eve, to flicker on the wall,
Life-like and beautiful. No more indeed,
Unto the spirit-lyre can be given
The silver chords once shatter'd, which pour'd forth
Sweet music in past years; and never more,
When time in the heart's temple has destroy'd

The first impassioned idols, and laid bare
Their shrines to desecration, can be fill'd
That aching void, and hollow sense of pain,
Which lapse of years, like water-drops on stone,
Works in the sternest nature at the last.
In all these things man's life deficient is;
Yet even more; he lacks the nobler power
To still the jarring passions of his heart,
So that, in peace uniting, they may end
That everlasting warfare which goes on
Betwixt his sense of right, his love for wrong,
Which shatters all his being, and which makes
His best of life but a remorseful dream,—
His only knowledge but a sense of pain,—
His greatest merit but endurance:—
To sum up all deficiency, man has
No over-ruling faculty to be
Unto himself all that he fain would be,
If it were possible, and when the world
Is dark and stormy, and all things without
Have suffer'd shipwreck on its cruel wave—
To turn to his own heart, and therein find
A sweet oasis of perpetual peace.

This may indeed be gift far too divine
For mere mortality;—yet being so,
It is withal a beautiful provision
Of our great Architect, that we possess
A power to reduplicate ourselves,
To clothe all Nature with our attributes,

And her material and bright universe,
To people with our frailties, and paint o'er
With hues of our own sorrows; for she thus
Becomes a general parent unto all;—
She has a voice to mourn with those who mourn,
A tone of gladness for the joyful heart;—
She weaves the varied tissues of our lives,
With her own colours, and identifies
Herself with every age;—builds up the cloud
Pacing the calm blue ether, as a sign
Of childhood's peace;—makes the low wind
Mourn for the long departed;—the pallid moon
Sail like a spirit through the stormy sky,
With resignation's smile; the tired sun
Sink in the west with all his glories round,
Like some good man that on his death-bed laid
Looks back to happy memories; and beneath
Spreads out these cloud-wove isles of sparkling light,
As emblematic of those purer climes,
Wherein we hope some day to roam in peace;
Thus blending her own life with ours, Nature
Doth not neglect us even at the last;
But visits our low graves, and builds them up,
A place of beauty;—and thereby is made,
In this dark world of intermediate clouds,
Unto the orphan spirit, what we hope
God will himself be at some future time,—
Companionship most perfect and most pure!

VII.

Thus, ever thus, O Nature! hast thou been
To me, at least, my purest and best love!
Oh! that my heart had never stirr'd from thee!
Oh! that my truant footsteps never yet
Thy green protecting lanes had left to roam
Upon the world's broad highway, and there mixt
With the vain crowd of worshippers that throng
Its altars at each step;—for I have drunk,
(By musing ever on the darksome past,—
The theme of death—the vanity of things,
And all the solemn changes of the earth,—)
Up to the very dregs the cup of life,
Scarce offer'd to my lips. I feel myself,
Amid the mighty forest of the world,
Lost like a wither'd and a falling leaf:
The idol of my youth has broken down,
The star-light of my boyhood sunk in death
My heart is hollow with the sense of pain,
And all the syren vices of the world—
Ambition, glory, pleasure, power, love,
Which stir the blood of thousands, never more
May move me now, or if they do, perchance,
'Tis like wind that, through some hollow shell,
Breathes the low moaning of a distant sea.
Oh! therefore, Nature! must thou be to me
In this dark, naked world, all things in all,
My home—my refuge—my delight—my peace;

Thy breeze that blows so coolly on my brow,
Once more shall soothe my fever'd pulse to calm,
And with pure natural joy remake it beat.
Thy clear pellucid streams in which I glass
My outward image as I move along,
Shall ever seem to bathe my spirit too,
Like Jordan's waters, or Bethsaida's pool,
With inward health. No more, oh, never more!
Will I think of the world but as of some
Strange and far city, of whose fame I've heard,
But never yet have seen; or like to those
Great Babylons of ancient time, whereof
The names alone are chronicled on earth.
I will imbue my spirit with thy love;
For evermore drink in with grateful lips
Thy morning dews—thy noontide's dreamy heat—
Thy breeze of eve, thy starlight's breathless calm,—
And ever by thy gentle influence
Will lose all passion and all vain regret,
And learn to live since life is all to come.

VIII.

And now I'm on the hills—the hills o'er-crown'd
With tall, majestic pines, whose massive shade
Grows dark and darker, further as I mount,
Until, methinks, up to this very spot,
The baffled spirit of the night had flown
Cow'ring from day's gaze, and here within

These ebon shades and these mysterious aisles,
Where neither sun, nor moon, nor star may pierce,
Still held the secret worship of its reign.
Here, as I stand imprisoned in this wood,
Silent myself, with silence all around,
And every breath most reverently hushed,
How all-expansive does my heart become
To feelings the most solemn and sublime!
So wondrous is the age of these old trees!—
So time-defying is their solemn look!—
So calm and changeless and immutable
They stand, as of Eternity's own growth,—
That, gazing on them, I can scarce believe
The world has ever grown one minute old,
Since first Creation's mirror was outspread,
And man had ever stained it with his breath:
There is so stern a consciousness of strength,
Breathing from this vast fortress all around,—
A silence as majestically deep,
Reposing on these dark hills, as that which comes
After the bursting of a summer cloud
Charged with the deepest thunder, when all is
Suddenly to the faintest echo still,
That Time, methinks, must have crouched down
in awe,
As he drew hither, and his foot-print too
Have trembled audibly as it pass'd in vain.
All, all alone in this dark forest-depth,
As in the very womb of Night itself—
The earth below me as completely hid,

As if it were not, and the sky above,
Scarce seen through this impenetrable veil,
Save one small glimpse of blue which gazes down,
As calm as it were a reflected lake;—
With no companion but my dreamy heart,—
No sense of life but what is here revealed
In thoughts gigantic by these giant trees,
My being of necessity resolves
Itself to theirs without the thought of change;
I drink with these great patriarchs of the world
Heaven's unbounded atmosphere, and feel
The pulse of my existence swell as pure,
As strong and as eternal as their own:
The snow of all their winters falls on me,
The green vitality of their age is mine,
And to the massive grandeur of their shape,
My spirit too seems visibly akin;
With them I raise my dark height to the sky,
And in God's presence stand without a fear,
Or plunge my deep roots to the heart of earth,
And know the riches of its darkest realm:
Whate'er the whirlwinds of each furrowing age,
Whate'er the storms of each tempestuous sky,
The rain, the lightning, and incessant hail,
The smiling sun-shine and the thunder cloud,—
Have writ in secret o'er their dark green brows,
I seem to feel too as twin-born with them;
All that their massive trunks contain within
Of dark experience, or of solemn lore
Comes like a flood upon me, and I float

A buoyant spirit o'er the gulf of Time,
Through years and centuries of historic change,
Up to the age primæval and there dwell
An old inhabitant of the elder world.
The Paradisal story of our birth—
The great examples of the sacred Book—
The glorious histories of prophetic life,—
The deathless memories of the sainted good,—
All that the morning world has ever known
Of grand, majestic, beautiful, and true,
Is present with me, and before me now,
Not as in dreams of childhood, but endowed
With bright reality and living life:—
Earth's most religious and resplendent minds,
Which, like a galaxy of human stars,
Have left a trail of ever living light,
All to their ancient hemisphere come back,
And through the grave's eclipse shine forth again.
I pass the gates of Paradise with Eve,
Who's weeping now, and Adam who turns back,
To gaze with longing on that home which since
Has been a type of future home to all.
I ride with Noah in the sacred ark,
And turn with wonder from that sea of rain,
Descending from above, unto the earth,
Heaving and boiling with an ocean's flood.
I go with Abraham at the call of God,—
With Hagar into the thirsty wilderness.
And now lie sorrowing close by Sarah's cave.
I start with Isaac on his lovely search.

And with him meet Rebecca at the well.
I dream with Jacob at the ladder's foot,
O'ertake kind-hearted Esau on the road,
And find how love can outlast jealousy.
With Joseph, the beloved Rachel's son,
I'm sold a captive into Egypt's realm;
And with him tread the journey of his life.
In after time I follow in the train
Of Hebrew pilgrims, that from Goshen's land
Bear their great father to his final rest.
With Moses since I mount the hill of God,
Or seek his place of burial in vain.
And now the cry of virgins do I hear,
That mourn their King, and David who bewails
No less for sinful Saul than Jonathan.
I see the fabric of the temple rise,
And tread its courts through long successive years,
With all the kings of Israel in turn;
Through all the varied fortunes of their line,
The degradation, exile, and return,
I also pass as being one with them,
Sometimes in sorrow through the silent streets
Of all abandoned Sion do I walk,
And with the few remaining mourn the lot
Of their lost brethren, and sometimes with these
By Babylonian rivers sit and weep.
And now the last of this most glorious race,
Of captains, kings, and prophets do I meet,
Walking the porch in unpretending guise,
Teaching from humble lips a truth divine,

Whose life unto their lives is what the sun,
Or radiant moon is to the lesser stars,
In whose effulgent light their light is lost,
In whom all meet, all vanish, and all close.
Thus all alone in this dark forest-depth,—
Feeding with Nature's majesty the heart,
Through memory's medium and the lightning glance
Of all-revealing thought, do I go down,
Descending one by one the steps of time,
Worn by such hallowed feet, and thereby live
In their great company, as they too have lived.

Oh! therefore, Man, why will you ever make
Your little life more empty than it is,
By passing it in disputations vain
Of that which is above all argument?—
In differences religious, and the war
Of party words, which lack all else but sound?
What is it that you wish? What would you have?
The path unto religion is most clear,
The heart is the best prompter of itself,
And where it needs direction, come abroad!
Within the green-paved temple of the world,
By boundless skies magnificently domed—
The vast cathedral of the universe,
With reverent spirit enter, and bow down!
Bow down to Nature's everlasting law!
Which works by simplest means an end divine;
Bow to the teaching of all ages past,
The memories preceptive which the dead

Have sanctified with their lives illustrious,
And which, with all experience combined,
Proves all religion to be simple love!
Gaze on the everlasting Sun which sheds
His gladness upon all, and make the heart
One universal sun for all mankind!
Turn to the stars at midnight that look down!
Like angels, in forgiveness, and there read—
In that still page that glows for ever bright,—
Repentance for thyself, and for all else,—
The charity they eloquently preach.
Look up to this vast forest with meek eyes!
Scan these majestic columns, and thence learn
How few incentives naturally doth need
Unto religion the religious heart!
A leafy beauty is the only pomp,
Age is the only decoration here,
Which gives the heart a solemnising mood,
And leads it, in commemorative dreams,
Back to that period primitive and pure
Of patriarchal beauty, when all those,
That trod the world in innocence, knelt down
With Abraham, the father of us all.
The only organ that is sounded here
Is the low whispering of the leaves—the rich
And choral chant of birds;—the only voice
Is a deep solitude;—the only praise
Is God's pure worship which I meekly join,
As at his altar bowed, and all alone!

IX.

A glorious and refreshing sight it is
For the worn heart, to see the world burst forth
From stilly dawn into meridian life!
As I descend, all round the hills become
Alive with flocks of sheep, whose bleating sounds
Soft to the ear, like infancy's first notes;
Now down the valley rings the huntsman's horn,
Sharp, clear, and beautiful, quick answer'd back
By some stray bark, or the deep bay of hounds.
Now distant steeples joyous carols ring,
Flinging their sounds to heaven with such glee,
As if they would announce there that the earth
Had intermarried with the day, and all
Was jubilee below. Now faint is heard
The city's rising murmur, like the throb
Subdued of some vast engine, or the sound
Of waters breaking on a distant shore;
Now through the air upfloats the farmer's call—
The clack of whips, the ploughman's hoarser cry,
As with the lazy team they move along
To early pasturage: now from the field
Is heard the measure of the labourer's song,
With whistling tune, or loud laugh interspers'd,
As if with every stroke his heart beat time,
And as he work'd, rude pictures of sweet home,
Of childhood's welcome, or of smiling wife
Throng'd through his healthy brain: and over all

O'er the lamb's bleating, or the sheep dog's bark,
The winding horn, the carolling of bells,
The murmur of the city and the plain,
Songs of the skies—music of the earth,
The cock's shrill cry is heard aloud and far,
Crowing from some high barn, as if he had
All through the night fierce battled for the day,
And, now triumphant, swell'd his fiery crest,
Clapp'd his short wings, and clear'd his length'ning throat
For the loud pæan chant of victory.
It is most truly at a time like this
When all these sounds enlivening combine
To make the dawn so beautiful, that we
Perceive how sadly,—silently—our hearts
Have changed in travelling o'er life's flinty road;
Of deep and tranquil happiness how much
We've lost in leaving Nature—our first love!
And vainly do we wish that but once more
Our life in all its freshness could return,
And once again within our hearts renew
The dawn of thought as it was wont to be,
And leave us free to those affections sweet,
Those young and pure emotions which we felt
When with spontaneous love we could return
Nature's kind greeting, as she greeted us.

X.

But yet, alas! how many through this day,
That dawns so sweetly for the world at large
Will never feel its outward influence!
Whose pallid cheeks, never will this breeze,
That blows so freely on all else beside,
Fan to the tint of health! whose tearful eyes
Sunken with toil, never will this sun,
And all the glorious firmament around,
Dazzle with beauty! and whose shrunken limbs,
Wasted with long confinement, never once
Throughout the long, long hours of this day,
This idle summer's day, may be released
To roam through Nature's garden, and there sport
In all the joyous consciousness of health,
In all th' elastic liberty of youth.
Alas! for these poor outcasts of the world—
These *youthless* children of our Factories—
Whose life is one long dark imprisonment!
Whose tender years should have been guarded round
With all sweet childhood's incidental care,
And yet who've never known what childhood is!
Ye mortal legislators of the world!
Who talk of education till the words
Glide glibly from your lips; whose boast it is
To guide intact the vessel of the state,
Through all the maze of politics diverse—
Mid all your schemes of speculative good,
Your weight of business, or your fancied cares,

Here lies your sphere of action and of use!
These are the orphans of the state whom you
Should first provide for, ere you would amend
Their hapless morals; whom you should let breathe
The sweet fresh air without, ere they can draw
This breath in thankfulness; and unto whom
You should reveal the God whom we adore,
In all the beauty of his glorious works,
In all the love he manifests abroad,
Ere their young souls can to that God aspire.
These are the victims of triumphant art!
These—the worst fruits of civilization!
Beneath whose progress irresistible—
As underneath some Indian Juggernaut,
Earth's humbler sons are helplessly crush'd down!
For whose sad sake, who claim no other share
In all the produce of this world's vast wealth,
Than the bare sustenance of a short-spun life,
Ye guides and leaders in this destined march
Of human intellect in the van of time,
Should shew some mercy while ye reap their toil!
For after all what is the statesman's aim?
Or rather should be! it is not alone
By skilful jugglery in the use of words,
To patch up ancient quarrels with new oaths,
Or rip up fresh ones with the blade of war;
'Tis not alone by traffic's giant stride,
To add to national or to private wealth;
Or strain the human intellect in search
Of Nature's mysteries, and the grasp of truth;
But legislation in its noblest form

Can boast a mission greater yet than these;
And, as *Religion's helpmate*, should work out
The diminution of all social pain
That springs from error in the social scale:
Should so adjust life's elements that each
May share in them at least: should fairly weigh
The rights of wealth with poverty's sad claim;
And make, in short, by all the common aids
Of reason and humanity and love
Man, *as a class*, dear to his fellow man,
And bind the social system in one link
Of mutual interest, and responsive good!

XI.

And now, methinks, the morn's sweet walk is o'er,
The glowing coursers of the Sun, that erst
Were cool and foamless at Aurora's dawn,
Now steam and pant upon their fiery course,
Impetuously swift,—yet still bear on
The God of light unto his mid-day throne:
O'er all the earth they've drunk the diamond dew;
Save but in shady nooks of forest dells,
Paved by dead leaves, and roofed by tangled boughs,
Where the sweet air retains its freshness aye,
And some lone bird upon a mossy bough,
Dreaming, perchance, the stars are overhead,
Pours to the solitude his midnight song.
The smoke ascending from the city's towers,
Or peasant's cottage in the peaceful vale;
Now the rough greeting of some shepherd boy

I meet reposing idly by a brook,
With ear attentive to its still, sweet tune,
And watchful gaze directed to the hills,
Where feeds his flock in quietude around—
And now the early fisherman I see,
Through opening trees, afloat upon the lake,
Whose bark up-heaving with the heaving wave,
Seems with its half-merged oar as rock'd to sleep;
And dripping nets, far flashing in the sun,
Gold-threaded gleam, as though they were the gift
Of some old Genii of Arabian fame—
The shouts of careless merriment that burst
From gipsies, camped within some hollow glade,
Whose swarthy children on the outskirts play—
The myriad breathing carols that I hear
Above me, and beneath me, and around,
Each tuned to airy music by the breeze,—
All, all proclaim that o'er the world's vast stage
Life's drama has again commenced, to which
Eternity is audience . . . . . .
So homeward now until the noon be come:
For on the dial of my heart I would
So mark the different portions of this day
In meditation pass'd, that when the flight
Of years has dulled Imagination's warmth,
And step by step into the vale of age
I'm gradually led down, still memory
May call a gleam of sunshine from the past,
And gladly show me how of all the times
And seasons of my life allotted here,
One day at least was not quite vainly spent.

NOON.

XII.

ONCE more away from all, once more abroad,
Into the sweet fresh air, and pathless fields!
As eager as a school-boy from his task
Flies to the joyous liberty of play,
Does my free spirit leave the narrow bounds
Of art-built habitations, and go forth,
Just like a thirsty reveller, to drink
The clear, delicious breezes, and beneath
No other roofing than the boundless skies,
No other prying than kind Nature's gaze,
To dream away, in meditation's vein,
In idle sorrow, or in pleasure's mood,
The sweet, voluptuous, lazy hour of noon.
There is a beauty in the calm decline
Of a long summer's day, and in the change
That to the eye poetic comes o'er all
The face of Nature at this dreamy time;
A change from labour and continuous sound
Into a state of stillness and of rest:
Now seems the whole wide world to have drunk in

Its full of light from the meridian sun,
And faint with its own happiness to lie
As in a languid sleep: all Nature now,
To have, like man, a retrospective power,
And in these quiet noontides of her life
To dream as we do of her earliest years
And seasons long since bloom'd. Above, the skies
Bright as a polish'd mirror without stain,
And cloudless as an ocean without foam,
Far, far above roll wave on azure wave,
So clear, and so immeasurably deep,
So rich and warm and glowing that, methinks,
In gazing upwards I could almost see
The faint-lit stars, as through a veil appear,
Or this bright-pictured scene of forest-tree,
Of lake and hill, and brook and flowery dale
See painted there, as clear reflected back,
As ships are mirror'd in a calm-bound sea.
The numerous sounds that through the morning air
Came sharp and clear, are all now faintly heard,
Lull'd by the drowsy atmosphere to rest;
All, save the lowing of some distant fold
That ever and anon upon the ear
Comes at sweet intervals, like those stilly sounds
Sometimes we hear through portals of a dream.
Beauty hath chang'd to beauty, and become
Softer in all its tints: the nut-brown woods
Stand out in deep repose, with scarce a leaf
Waved to the passing breeze: far, far away,
Upon the horizon's brink, a few white clouds

Are roll'd and piled, like Ocean's billowy foam,
Till to the charmed eye they take the shape
Of habitations fairy-like and strange,
Which, e'en to look at, bring back the old faith
And antique lore of childhood, when this world
Was one enchanted palace, and all things
Bow'd to a magic wand. Now flows the stream
In lazy undulations, rippling up
So still and noiseless unto either bank,
That every moment its slow current seems
To pause in converse with the waving flags
That crown the margin, and to bid them stoop,
Bow'd by the idle wind, and bathe themselves,
For sweet refreshment's sake. From out the bush
The black-bird's song has swell'd a deeper note;
And over head the multitudinous rooks
Are whirling in half-circles through the air,
Or from their towering nests so loudly prate,
That the whole skies seem musical; the ear
Bewitch'd with sound, doth rival every sense
In deep enjoyment; while all other things—
The warmth, the breeze, the flood of languid light,
The brook's faint murmur, and the sleepy lake,
The forest's stillness, and the hill's repose,
The sense of deep contentment at the heart;
All, all uniting make this golden noon
Seem like a thousand summers heap'd in one
Most poetic, dream-like, and beautiful!

XIII.

Sweet rooks! domestic birds! I love you well,
And your familiar chattering in the air;
For never do I hear it but, methinks,
It sounds to me like echoes of old times,
Interpreting endearingly the past,
Which intervening years have mellowed now,
As distance your rough voices softens down,
To recollections the most sadly sweet:
Ye do remind me of long days dreamt through,
As in our youth we all divinely dream,
Beneath the moveless shade of massive elms,
With gaze half-fixed upon the gleaming spire
Of Angmering's sweet village, and within
The faintest hearing of those life-drawn sounds,
Which make the music of a summer-noon,
And come from children in the meadows round,
From cattle drinking at the running fount,
From some old church-tow'r whereon Time doth sit,
And with a falt'ring tongue tells out its age,
From passing footsteps thro' the church-yard gate,
The hum of bees, the one bird's single note,
From drowsy mill above the drowsier stream,
All by the golden sunshine kissed to peace.
Oh! then and there as I lay dreaming down,
Unknowing of all worlds save Nature's own,
And from the blue and boundless void drank in
The love of all things beautiful and good,

How soon awoke within my heart, as with
The magic touch of a divining wand,
All sparks that slumber'd of poetic fire!
And, like the prophet on his car of flame,
Imagination to the clouds upsoared,
And revell'd there delighted. Sometimes, within
The snowy chasms of their fleece-like depths,
I seemed to plunge as in a bath divine,
And rise, like Venus, from a sea of foam;
Sometimes, along the world's empurpled rim,
Cloud upon swelling cloud, like mountain towers,
I piled,—all burnished with the amber light,
Until the gods, on high Olympus throned,
Upon these gorgeous temples of the sun
Looked down and wondered; or, sometimes, again—
Cradled, methought, within the dark blue depths,
I gazed, as through a curtain, on the globe
Rolling in all its majesty beneath,
Till, to the music of the pealing stars,
That chime the Angels on their distant flight,
For evermore I seemed to fall and fall
Into one deep, divine, eternal sleep,
Wherein the whole vast scenery of the world,
So beautifully, magically calm,—
The ocean heaving with a soundless wave,—
The snow-capped mountains purpling in the sun,—
The isles uprising like to sea-wrought gems,—
The gleaming rivers and the glass-like lakes,—
The fields, the forests, and untrodden dells,—
And all the pictured continent that folds

The habitations of man's pigmy race,—
Rose, like the gorgeous fabric of a dream!
Beloved Angmering!
Through many a long and pleasant summer-time,
Thou to my noon-tide rambles wast the sweet
And contemplative bourne!—I will not leave
Thy name unmentioned here; for I have known
Far more of deep and tranquil joy near thee
Than ever to my lot has fallen since;
When I was quite as ignorant of the world,
As now I'm sadly satisfied of all
The world may deem is knowledge. Dear village!
I breathe a wish for my return to thee;
And though such breathing may be all in vain,
Even to wish as much is happiness!
No more thy placid beauty will exist
For me, I fear, but as sometimes is found
A landscape of delicious colouring
Within a chamber desolate and dark,
And full of old memorials that proclaim
Life, joy, and sunshine had once made therein
A transitory home. Then fare thee well!
Bright be the morning skies above thy head!
Oft may the noon-tide come and find thee still—
Or labouring as makes labour sweet to bear!
And long around thee may the western sun
Linger in all his glory, as he wished
To dream of beauty pensive as thine own!
Healthy and cheerful may thy tenants live!
Few be thy poor, and generous thy rich!

And may the long succession of thy dead,
Within their lowly, unimposing beds
Serenely sleep; and, when, as mine have done,
The stranger's footsteps pass above their graves,
May they from him the same meek rev'rence gain,
As I have paid them alway.

XIV.

How sweet it is upon a noon like this,
Our time at leisure and our hearts at peace,
To leave behind us far the busy mart,
The jars, the fierce ambition, and the strife
Of the great human world, and flee for rest
To some green solitude, wherein no life
Stirs but the most harmless; where the clear air
Is redolent of sweets; where all things breathe
That beautify in breathing; and where reign
Such calm repose and liberty of soul,
That, coming there, you seem to have outstepped
The boundary of the exterior world,
And entered into the inmost sanctuary
Of Nature, and, as to a holy strain,
To list the flood of melody she pours
From thousand throats unto a thousand ears,
Herself the charmed and charmer ... There beneath
Some branching tree of solitary growth,
Whose hoary age is stronger than our prime;
Where bygone generations may have play'd

Their childish revels out—how sweet it is
To sit us down with volume in our hands
Of some old doctrine of Philosophy,
And through its pages commune with the great,
The master-spirits of antiquity!
To read how with a will sublime they yearn'd
To burst the thraldom of the olden time,
To be the teachers of humanity,
To leap from darkness into light, to solve
The problem of creation, and attain,
By man's sole intellectuality,
Unto the truth and noon-day revelation,
Which we of later birth are favored with:
And, as we read, how beautiful to feel
The glow of admiration on our lips,
And at our hearts the pride of fellowship!
As if their voices still reverberated
Upon the echoing praise of after-tongues,
Or still their forms appeared familiar
From out the dusky avenues of Time.
Then having ponder'd long o'er every page
All but inspired, and imbued ourselves
With their divine philosophy—how sweet
A change it is to lay the book aside,
And fall to contemplation wholly .....
To watch the shadows length'ning o'er the hills,
The distant flocks now browsing on their slope,
And now quiescent in the noontide heat,
A sleeping picture of a life of sleep;
The placid stream curve idly to the shore,

Some insect world upon its current borne,
The young leaves flutt'ring in the scarce-heard breeze,
Or crisping gently on the greensward bank;
To see the clouds voluptuously sail by,
And weave their shades fantastic at our feet;
Or with our upturned eyes to mark the blue
Of the blue heavens grow deeper as we gaze,
Until we yearn to take ætherial wing
And bathe in its pure depths . . . . . At such time,
When like a flood of inspiration breaks
The sense of all that is most beautiful
In this material and prophetic world,
Upon our hearts contemplative, how sweet,
Calmly and gently and devoid of fear,
To glide in spirit down the tide of Time,
And at the confluence of eternity,
To dream of meeting face to face that band
Of glorious Philosophers, in the wake
Of whose far-gleaming sails we humbler ones
Have made the later voyage of this life,
And, in such company, of pursuing then
The journey everlasting . . . . . .
Briefly thus,
In Fancy's lap our world-worn thoughts to lay,
And, on imagination's reinless wing,
To flee away, is happiness extreme.

XV.

Why should we ever toil—and toil in vain?
Why ever seek for happiness in things
That burst like airy bubbles, and can yield
No food for sweet reflection afterward,
When Nature's pleasures are so freely ours,
And know no diminution, and no change?
True happiness is in simplicity:
All other sources are but tainted springs
That, sparkle as they may with freshness now,
Will soon become most brackish to the taste,
And heap regrets for our forthcoming years,
In which, at length, we veil ourselves and mourn.
The child that flings a pebble from the bank,
And stands with wistful eye to watch its fall
In endless circles ripple the clear stream,
Feels ecstasy as real and as deep
As he who leads whole armies to the field.
For after all what do we gain by years?
When first we spread our venturous sails and leave
The harbour of our childhood,—soon we find
All other seas are full of stormy change,
And there's no land to meet our after gaze,
So full of promise and such fairy light,
As is the one we're leaving in our wake.
Our youth we wear as we would some gay mask
To serve a carnival; the charm it yields
Is but a fevered cup at which have drunk

Our fathers all before us, and have found
To be most empty, as we do in turn.
Our manhood of life's ladder is a step
On which we build the noblest expectations,
And fondly think to realize youth's dreams;
But ere we're let to crown what we've begun,
Or take our breath to reap what has been done,
Time piles his crushing weight upon our backs,
Takes one by one our treasures from our hands,
And leaves us stranded on the shore of age,
Half—prey to sorrow, half—unto oblivion.
Thus flow our years, like petty streamlets by,
And cram what follies into them we will,
Fret, if we must, or reason, as we may,
Our breadth of life is but the narrowest span,
We take one leap from childhood to the man,
And then nod on until we fall asleep;
And, if we reckon up, as our last sum,
The real profit and the loss of life,
What golden fruits we've gathered in our race,
We soon find out that those alone have left
The happiest memories and the brightest trace,
That mostly flowed from Nature's own sweet fount,
From pure simplicity and a loving heart.

XVI.

Here stands the church whose spire I perceived
Glimmering far off just at the break of day
Like some bright arrow darting to the sky:

And, now, as I draw near to it, and cross
The vale which it o'erlooks, I find it is
One of those simple churches which abound
Through rural England, and which lend a charm
So sweet unto the landscape that they crown.
A place of old and reverential date—
Of heaped up years that slumber now in peace!
Where many a stoneless grave upheaves the turf,
And bears a testimony to the lowly lot
Their occupants once held, and perhaps where these
In childhood's hour full oftentimes have come
From yonder hamlet round the tombs to play
Of their past ancestors, and here, may be,
In after years have won their village bride,
And then were gathered in a ripe old age,
When, love, and life, and labour o'er, were left
Children to play with their paternal dust,
As they with their forefathers'.

How wonderfully quiet is this spot!
So calm, so peaceful, and serene is all
I see around me, that approaching it
I seem to pass the borders of this world,
And breathe a purer atmosphere than earth—
The very air of Heaven! Yon row of yews,
How green and ven'rable they stand, that shade
The gateway-path up to the simple porch,
Where life has entered and departed too!
And see! how through the boughs the church-clock
gleams,

On whose gold-lettered face a sun-beam smiles
Like God may smile upon Eternity!
How many sleepers have these old yew trees
Seen carried underneath them, whose green tops,
Have felt the flow of full five hundred years
Pass scathless o'er them, and yet still bloom forth
Solemn and dark, as if within their trunks
Were chronicled the secrets of the dead,
From age to passing age. Here as I stand
Beneath their antique boughs, whose shadows stretch
Across the church-yard turf, methinks, once more
At Fancy's call I see before me rise
The village congregations, which were wont
In quiet groups on many a Sunday noon
Long cancel'd out from memory and time,
To throng through yonder porch.—Here used to pass
The village squire with his well-known step
Of fanciful importance; here would lean
Upon his arm robust, his trusting mate
Gaudy with colours, and dealing out her smiles
Of self-congratulation to the crowd
Parting on either side; here too would come
The ruddy farmers, with their heavy step,
Most rubicund with health; behind would throng
Sweet village maidens with their side long looks,
Demurely cast in bashful recognition
On many a favour'd youth; while in between,
Stood groups of wondering children; and, at last,
Here too would come the minister revered,
His gray locks flowing in the playful wind,

And smile of benediction on his lips
For all his home-ward flock—now these are gone!
All, all, perhaps, their last prayer utter'd here,
And then in turn departed, never more
To commune with each other, but to lie
Each with his face upturn'd to heaven's vault,
Waiting from thence the gathering of saints
And general reveal.
I love to stray
Midst such a scene as this, at such a time,
When the gold light of noon comes streaming down
On these old relics of humanity,
And unto them doth lend a charm so full
Of sanctity, that for the first time when,
The heart in sadness ponders upon those
These tombs commemorate, it travels back
With natural impulse to that hallow'd age
When all that sleep here, once in their frail lives,
Were graced with beauty, innocence, and youth;
I love to see the ivy tendrils cling
Close to the mouldering walls, like pious youth
Endearingly to age; to light upon
Some half-obliterated epitaph,
Or some old stone sunk to the grassy edge,
And weave thereby a history all my own.
To fancy that therein may rest unknown
Two lovers sleeping in one common grave,
Two children summoned to an early bed,
Or some old pilgrim dreaming all alone.
I love to watch the sunbeams as they leap

From tower to roof, from roof to window-pane,
Till in a golden flood they settle down
Upon some ancient monument, with light
So pure and holy, that it almost seems
As if the memories of the good and just,
Like lamps, shone round their sepulchres, to keep
Their dwelling place in mind, or sweeter still,
As if immortal spirits here were met
To talk of resurrection, while they threw
Their shadows on the tombs.—
Beyond the porch,
As I pass in, and pace the narrow aisle,
How different is the stillness that prevails,
From that which reigns outside! *There* all, indeed,
Is deep and voiceless peace, and the repose
Is beautiful,—as if, on every grave
An angel sat, and lulled to pleasant dreams
The slumberers below;—but *here* within—
The silence is so awful and profound,
All is so darkly, shadowly reveal'd,
That the lone echoes of my tread come back
With startling clearness, as if beneath me
The dead responded from their hollow beds,
Resenting this intrusion! Yet how sweet
And full of life these few rare sunbeams seem,
That stream in shapes fantastic through the panes,
And ever and anon upon the floor
Chase one another with a golden foot,
As if, like noiseless cherubims, they kept
A watch familiar here, or oftentimes

Some disembodied spirit, come to haunt
The place made sacred by his earthly prayers,
Trod softly here and vanished.—
The pulpit,
Vacant and altogether echoless,
And the deserted rows of seats beneath,
(Where sings on holy-days the village choir,)
Appearances most mournful seem to have,
As if they really felt themselves to be
The only *known* memorials of life,
With all its prayers and benisons, long since
Departed heavenward.—Within the space
Of the low altar-vail, a picture hangs,
Defaced by age, yet venerable still
To simple villagers, and on one side
An epitaph and quaint memorial
Remembers the first founder, who beneath
Sleeps carved in effigy, while overhead
A dusty banner, colourless with time,
Waves in the air, an emblem of his toil
And martial calling.
Here could I linger,
Seated upon this bench, and muse on all
The solemn problems of an after world;
What Death may be, and resurrection's hope,—
Till twilight came—the moon rose up—and gave
Unto these creeping shadows ghostly life,
And one by one, like angel-eyes, peered through
The earnest stars, as if they loved to look
On such a holy scene . . . . . But fast the noon

Is melting into eve, and only half
Of my intended ramble is yet o'er.
Ere I depart, one last and farewell wish
To this old church I'll breathe:—if e'er in life
My future fate should be to settle down
Within its neighbourhood,—here in this calm
And quiet resting-place, (since most of us,
With pardonable weakness, would make choice
Of some sweet spot of earth to consecrate
Our remnants of mortality,)—here too
Would I at close of life wish to be laid;
And with those elder travellers would make
My turf-piled bed. Above me, willow trees
Should monumental be; in early spring
Should shed their leaves' memorial of my youth
And its first hopes; through the long summer's heat
Should catch the sunbeam darting thro' their boughs,
Sometime to shade, sometime to let its light
Stray like an angel's smile above my tomb,
Silvering the dark turf; in autumn's calm
Their falling leaves should shower thick and fast,
Like natural mourners, and whene'er the gloom
Of desolating winter is at hand,
Sadd'ning the sun's sweet smile—then these old
yews
That stand as guardians of the kindred dead,
With their eternal verdure should bloom round,
Like promise of my immortality.
And thus while I commingled with the dust,
(The grass sprung thick in blade, the turf fell low,)

The carved letters took an ancient date,
And my name stole from knowledge,—still the world
Would change as heretofore ;—all things anew,
Grow old and die, and darken to the past ;
And still the years one after one would glide ;—
Unconsciously to me indeed, but yet
So peaceful and serene, round this sweet spot,
That should some after traveller be found,
As pensive as myself, to visit here,
Enchanted by the scene, he would p'rhaps think,
As I do now, that these long-garner'd dead—
The recollection of their treasured lives,
The sweet reflections on their joys to come,
Had o'er the melancholy brow of "Time"
A smile prophetical of gladness shed,
Had made the wallet on his shoulder slung
More precious and less burdensome to bear,
Had soften'd down the wrinkles on his face,
And to the hollow footfall of his march
Had lent a softer and a sweeter sound—

XVII.

How beautiful the spot to which I'm come !
Wand'ring as one who lets his footsteps stray
Vaguely with his thoughts, and these flow on
As streams meander, careless of their bend,
Through pleasant meads, and water them at will.
Here the deep woods, whose margin I had meant

To skirt at leisure through the afternoon,
Now suddenly receding form a curve,
Like an indented bay, and leave a space
Of open sward, so fresh and greenly turf'd,
And climbing upward with such gentle slope,
That, like a natural harbour, it doth seem
To greet the traveller weary of his way,
And bid him turn there, careless of all toil,
And never more go wand'ring from its shade.
All round this forest-opening, giant trees
With massive trunks and hugely spreading arms,
Like pillars of an amphitheatre,
Stand planted in deep rows, with just a space
For frailer stems their thin boughs to entwine,
Weaving a natural trellis-work, through which
The sunbeams dart in showers; round either side
The breeze comes stealing with a playful sound,
Making the dead leaves crisp along the grass,
As waves break on a beach. Beyond one arm
Of this green harbour, I can just perceive
The blue lake rippling to the shelving shore,
O'er whose still surface ever and anon
Some lonely sail flits like a sea-bird by,
Piloted unseen. Beneath me lies
The valley with its deep romantic dell,
The hamlet clustering as in sweet repose;
And, over-towering all, from yonder church
The golden clock gleams through the tufted wood,
As if to tell the world, so still beneath,
That Time can never sleep. Beyond the vale

A gradual range of undulating hills,
Blending their deep green with the deeper hue
Of the blue sky, climb the horizon's verge;
And on their furthest boundary, the trees,
Grouping at solitary distances,
Bear with their outlines indistinct the shape
Of palm trees in a desert, and thus lead
The eye to wander, with a charmed gaze,
From group to group, from hill to rising hill,
Till the whole scene imaginatively swells
To some unbounded prairie, whose green waves
For ever rolling with the rolling sky,
Are lost in the immensity of space.

Here in this cool retreat, how oft could I
Betake me with some dear, familiar friend,
If such it were my destiny to know,—
Some one who had grown with me up from youth,
Whose heart, like mine, o'erflow'd with Nature's love;—
Here underneath this forest's spreading shade,
Fann'd by the breeze, and shelter'd from the heat,
Would we lie down, and many a golden noon
Beguile, in silent ecstasy of thought;—
Or, breaking the deep stillness, perhaps we might
With solemn converse lighten up the past;—
In low sad tones the memory invoke
Of those old guardians of our infancy,
Who, far away beneath some shelt'ring mound,
Are sleeping the calm slumber of the blest,

And of whose love the recollection still
Dwells with eternal "fragrance in our hearts;"—
Or one by one try to revive again
The strange impressions of our childish days,
When we would wonder if an acorn fell,
And startle with surprise if we but saw
Our shadows waving with the breeze-kiss'd grass,
Or broken strangely in the brook's clear glass.
Thence sailing up life's stream would we recall
The playmates of our boyhood, whom no more
Our gaze shall light upon, and wonder how
The dark experience of the world hath dealt
With their young hearts, and to what foreign scenes
Time in its vicissitude had led them.
Then all the glories of meridian youth,
Its baseless visions and enchanting hopes,
Would rise before us, like the well-known sight
Of those aerial pictures that are seen
Sometimes in summer on the clear bright air,
And which awhile reflect in shining hues
All things around them, and then quick dissolve
Leaving but reminiscences behind,
Half sad, half pleasing, half clear, and half confused.
And if perchance the shadow of the world,
Of gorgeous cities and of wealthy marts,
Should steal across us in our pensive mood,
It would be only as we often see,
Sometime reclining in suburban fields,
Spires and domes and monuments uprise
In hazy outline near to us, and which,

Through the rich medium of a summer noon,
Its mellow veil of intervening light,
Lose all the stern reality of stone,
And readily to the dreaming fancy paint
The distant wonders of a fairy town.
Thus silent now, and now in converse sweet,
Our voices blending with the murmuring gale,
Our senses lull'd by the soft rippling lake,
Would we cheat on the time until we felt
Drowsy with growing languor; then perchance
Deep sleep might overtake us, and our eyes
Close simultaneous to all outward things;
Yet in our sleep still would the same bright scene
Be pictured to us, but now colour'd o'er
With strange enchantment and those wondrous hues
Imagination in a dream doth lend;
For still in floods the golden light would pour,
And grow so rich, celestial, and so bright,
Filling the whole, wide heavens, till it seem'd
To have a voice and speak to us. The clouds
Would one by one unroll themselves and pass
Before us at slow pace, until they built
Up to our dreaming gaze aerial shapes
Of floating islands, from whose radiant shores
Strange forms would rise, half-drown'd in rosy light,
Beckoning with visionary hands
For our loved company;—the lake would swell
Up to our very feet, and in its sound
Of rippling waters would we think to trace
The lips of mermaids uttering beneath

Strange revelations of their wave-roof'd homes,
Their gem-lit caverns and their coral sands,
Where never foot has wander'd save their own,
And never sunbeam stray'd ;—the birds would sing,
Deep'ning in music, till their voices grew
Like angel-melodies, and anon the breeze
Would steal upon us with a restless sound,
And whisper in our ears of foreign climes,
Whence it had wander'd on a roving wing,
Where grew the orange, and the citron tree,
And flowers blossom'd of such hues as made
Earth vie with Paradise, and the sweet air
Grew faint with odour ;—or of far-off lakes
Whose blue waves slumbering on the forest-shore,
Its breath had just since fann'd, and whose calm depths
Glass'd but the motion of the wild-bird's wing ;—
Or perhaps of some still wilderness, where groups
Of Arabs sat beneath a palm-tree's shade,
Watching their camels kneeling in the sand,
While curl'd the thin smoke from their long chibouques,
And the red sun sunk in the gorgeous West,
Emblazoning all earth. Thus could we sleep
And dream, and dream until the charmed spell
Of thought were broken, and thereon we might
Wake simultaneous with a sudden start,
And smile of sweet surprise, as if we had
Eternity foreknown, and this were but
One long and pleasant dream.

XVIII.

Though few the pleasures of our waking days,
And unsubstantial as the dreams they bring,
Though from our cradle to our rising tomb
Sorrows so thicken round us as to make
Our breathing one continuous sigh, our lives
But one long funeral pageant to the end,—
Still, still in this bright natural world we find
Prophetic teachings of glad things to come!
Still through its veil transparent do we trace
The glories of an inner temple, where
Some time we hope to enter; still we hear,
As from an unseen company around,
Sounds of innumerable harmonies,
That glad our weary pilgrimage, and sing
All things are mourning now, to joy anon.

XIX.

But hark!
What sound is that comes rising on the breeze,
Filling the air with sadness, as I pass
From the dense wood into the open sky?
It is a death-bell peal'd from yonder church.
There is sweet melody in those funeral bells,
Striking the air all-hush'd and echoless,
Which to his rest some unknown pilgrim call;

Our lives beget a medley of strange sounds,
Strange in their expressive harmony,
With all our fitful and impassion'd moods,
Our times of melancholy and of mirth,
Our living thoughts, our acts, and prescient dreams,
Whose echoes changing with our changing years,
And ever blending into one long chime,
Do bear us in their modulation onward,
Till all the momentary breath that waked,
And all the voices that attuned and shaped
Life's merry opening, and its childish growth,
Its eager youth, and manhood's fiercer strife,
Its full-told ripening, and calmest fall—
Into one comprehensive sound are merged,
And knell'd to silence.
But of all sounds that harmonize our lives,
And sway the heart with their ascendancy,
There is no sound so solemnly intoned,
So beautifully, spiritually sad,
As is the melody of a funeral bell.
E'en in the city's hum, or echoing tread
Of thronging multitudes, it hath a power
Some lingering footstep to arrest, and wake
A brief attention; but whene'er it falls
Upon the ear unoccupied, and floats
Companionless along the clearing breeze
From some old church amid the village fields,
Whose gray tower peeps from out a leafy knoll
Of antique trees, and in the sunny light
Looks a bright beacon to the wand'ring eye,

Where all around instinctively is still,
Or the few sounds that rise upon the air
Are softly breath'd, solitarily sweet,—
Then is its cadence solemn-toned indeed,
And hath a charm peculiarly its own;
And we receive it as an echo sent
From that all viewless and else silent world
Which borders on our own; then do we bend
Wholly to its influence, and a sense
Of melancholy, soft as deep'ning shade
Of twilight closing on a sun-lit vale,
Steals o'er the heart subdued, and all things seem
To mourn in company.—Nature herself
Clothed round with sadness, and the very leaves
Grow swayless in the breeze, as if she drew
Her breath more quiet, and some outward proof
Of sorrow gave for a departing child.

Here, as I pause to gaze along the scene,
The funeral train comes slowly into sight,
And from the village to the churchyard wends.
No funeral pomp is there to wound the eye
With mockery absurd; no lengthen'd train
Of gorgeous sorrow or obtrusive woe;—
But all is quiet, eloquent, sublime;—
The mourners few,—the ceremonial brief,—
The simplest close unto a simple life.

XX.

Oh! soon shall that hour come, when we too must
Make up our pack, and take our journey hence!
No longer be the warn'd and the reflecting,
But in ourselves, the teachers unto others;
When the *to-day* shall bring us to the end
Of all experience to this life familiar,
And the *to-morrow* shall become to us
Of dawn appalling and inscrutable.
A few more breathings of our measured health,
A few more revolutions of those years,
That with their lightning speed are hurrying on,
Unto the consummation of all things
That link our resting place to brighter spheres,
And then our separation is at hand,
And we are gone; we too shall pass beyond
The gate of all mortality, and spring
From off this seen and comprehended shore
Into the dark and fathomless unknown.

Where in the ever-fluctuating tide
Of the great circumstances of this world,
Can change be found competitor with death—
The change unparalleled of all earthly change?
Here is the sum and test of all instruction,
The bourne to which all human track must tend,
All footsteps cease as on a soundless shore.
Here wisdom is tongue-tied!—Philosophy

Shuts up its book, and puts its candle out!
The speculator's fears are at an end,
His calculations o'er, his 'counts summ'd up,
And all his profits gulph'd in one dread loss!
Here sleeps at length the ever-scheming brain,
The web of fancy, and the glow of thought,
With all their train of visionary fires,
Paled out to cold reality, and brought
Unto a long, and vacant, dreamless close!
Here lies the warrior down in solitude,
Whose banner once led millions up in arms,
And with their earthquake-tread alarm'd the earth!
Here all alone he lays him down at last,
With pale hands folded on a heaveless breast,
Wherein once glow'd, volcano-like, a heart
That throbbed in war as in its element;
And with a cold and inattentive face
As if through those thin lips the dread command
Had never passed, that thousands hurl'd to death;
Or in those ears now sealed for evermore,
With all their mad delirium, never once
Battle's intoxicating shouts had rung—
The roll of music with the martial drum—
The iron tread of cavalry's swift charge—
The rattle of the smoking musketry—
The cannon's roar—the bayonet's fierce clash—
Defeat's sad shriek, or Victory's ringing cry!
Here all the fever of humanity,—
The pulse of suffering, and the throb of fear,
The fool's poor folly, and the teacher's pride,

The clash of party, or of general strife,
The laughter, revelry, and insanity,
The thousand contradictions of our lives,—
All meet here in one chamber to go through
Their last and struggling scene; and we ourselves,
The brief enactors of this brief-drawn play,
The poor embodiment of this petty life,
Disrobed of all its circumstance and pomp,
Here end, at length, in bare oblivion,
Like children that have dallied with a toy,
That at the last has broken in their hands,
And then they play no more!

XXI.

Delicious is the sound of waters near,
Breaking from some sweet fountain on the grass;
Delicious, too, is this sweet bed of moss,
Where I can lay my tired length along,
And bathe my temples in the running wave.
Alas!
Why must this sweet day vanish like the rest?
Why cannot I for evermore take up
My habitation here, and make this spot
My only natural home? For evermore,
Reclining on this soft couch of velvet turf,
Inhale the freshness of the morning breeze
As it just wrinkles the pure, limpid brow
Of this half-murmuring, half-reposing fount?

At noontide revel in the curious shades
These old, embracing trees fling all around,
Or join the simple music of my voice
Unto the cadence, passionate and deep,
These feather'd angels of the world send up ?—
And from the holy, meditative stars,
That seem within the solemn depths of night,
Each to be pond'ring on its own strange fate,
Drink the divinest contemplation in ?—
And thus by musing, dreaming evermore,
Grow through a transformation sweet and strange,
A sentient part of this most verdant nook,
The sweet intelligence of this hidden life,
The only animated spirit here,
The unobtruded Deity of this spot ?
Sweet is the wish, but vainer still than sweet !
For while we draw a breath, so unlike that
Which Nature draws, fever'd by this world's care,
With only that communion which she deigns
To hold with us, must we contented be.

Pleasant it were in faith's last struggling hour,
A loving farewell interchanged with all,
To pass from life and, unreluctant, sleep
To sounds of spiritual melodies
From heavenly watchers ; unconscious then
Of dreamless nights that intervene, wake up
And find ourselves become the ruling gods,
Spirits of this glorious universe !—
To be omnipotent in Nature's law ;—
Sail with delighted pinion on the cloud,

Or on the whirlwind's blast be borne along
To Nature's highest temples, and there muse
In god-like solitude! To mount behind
Light'ning's electric car, and fathom all
The mystic science of this mystic globe!
Or on the bounding waves triumphant ride,
Like spirits of the element, with power
To rule them at command! To pass the range
Of all the starry melodies, until
Music for ever in our hearts we bore!
Ah, this indeed were prospect most divine!
Then why should we, whose spirits are imbued
With natural holiness and a love
For all things breathing,—why indeed should we,
Since all things change in Nature, fear our own?
Let us take courage and pursue the path
We know to be the best; with patience wait
For the great charter of our liberty,
By God's own signet stamp'd; and then, methinks,
To die will be to cease to live, as now
In this most weak and care-distracted frame:
As on a summer's noon I've sometimes seen
The tired boatman, 'neath an o'erhanging tree,
Lay by his dripping oars, and, shelter'd there,
Charm'd by the music of the rippling stream,
And all oblivious of his toil, sleep on;—
So we, in sweet forgetfulness of all
That's been before or left behind, shall close
Our eyes upon the outer world, and then
Ethereal strains of harmony shall waft
Our spirits, homeward-bound!

XXII.

But see, my Muse!
How o'er the bosom of the skies above,
As stainless erst as yon blue lake beneath,
Gather the clouds of Eve! Yon fleecy isle,
How beautifully, lazily it sails!
As if it had within its depths serene
A meditative spirit and forethought
Upon that glorious legacy of light,
Which to these beauteous children of the sun
The dying day shall give. Here let me rest
Until that time be come, and in the shade
Of this dark mossy nook, and to the tale
Which this old fountain seems to tell of her
Whose tears of love were changed to a sweet wave,
Let me live through the remnant of this noon,
And sleep the light, the heat, and toil away.

EVE.

XXIII.

AND now the day declines, and like a dream
The far-contending sounds, the joyous strife,
The myriad scenes and pageantry of life,
Which shaped it, oblivion clouds apace.
A glorious dream it hath been! yet how sweet
Its breaking and last closing scene of all!
Now shoots the sun his farewell splendours forth
Upon the dark'ning world, and round him now,
Their fleecy glories trailing from afar,
The clouds attendant meet. Now glow the skies
Beneath his golden breath with deep'ning heat,
And hues so rich, yet temperately bright,
So softly tinged, yet gorgeously enwove,
It seems as if from some far spirit world
A population glorious had come down
To take their evening flight beneath the sun,
And all the clouds with hallelujahs fired.
There is a homeward spell upon all hearts—
A glow of stilly contemplation,
That to this hour lends sanctity extreme;

As if, with yonder light that streams above,
Sweet thoughts like angels came, and for a while
Bathed Earth in deep serenity; or Time
Now lingered pensive on his weary march,
And drooped his furrowed head upon his hand,
To reckon up his years. . . . . .

How hushed are all things at the foot of Eve!
How voiceless grows the spirit, and intense
The being that it feels! Our circling years
Narrow to this one span; the very world
Is closing fast around us, till it seems
By the horizon bounded, and to end
But with the visible shore whereon we stand.
The knowledge of far climes and other lands
Grows strange and fabulous; and even now
Imagination all but bounds itself,
And fears the world may be unchangeable,—
This pause of life may be the only calm
We ever shall enjoy—and the sweet faith
Of Heaven beyond so yearningly retained,
May be a glowing fancy which the heart,
Dreaming, has borrowed from the natural world.
Oh! praise, unbounded gratitude, and love
To God be given that this is not the case;
And that our hope of everlasting joy
Doth rest upon a surer rock than these
Mere passing pageants of a passing world;—
The magical effects of wind and cloud—
The transitory glories which the sun

Builds in the air to die along with him:
The voice of revelation has been heard,
And given its deep comfort; and now, no more
At his departure shall the good man feel
Corroded with deep sadness, as he sees
Setting on him the sun of this bright world!
No more shall Nature's lover at the grave
His everlasting farewell take of her.
Since Christ has visited Humanity,
A flood of glory has descended down,
And given to the universe entire
A character and meaning spiritual;
Its all-surpassing loveliness no more,
As to the Pagan eye, is clouded now
With a dark secret; from Creation's face
The veil of mystery has been torn away
That sadden'd all its beauty, and now man
Can trace in Nature's everlasting smile
A Parent's love intelligibly told;
Through all her features manifold he sees
The shadow of God's countenance revealed;
In all the magic voices that abound
In this harmonious, ever-sounding world,
He hears re-echoed eloquently on
The dying promise Calvary gave forth;
In all the clouds' magnificence he finds
A pageant far more wonderful—a type
Of heaven's bright reality; and all
The starry population unto him
In their eternal revolutions tell

A history far sublimer than their own—
The tale of Bethlehem! and thus indeed,
Whereas the dark and speculative mind
Of old inquirers, long since laid to dust,
Drinking at Nature's fountain, could but find
A vague foundation for a vague surmise,
And felt the draught more bitter as it gave
Sweetness to hope most vain,—the Christian now,
Though drinking chiefly at the well of life,
And truth's receptacle, discovers still
In this same fountain confirmation strong
Of Scriptural promise.

XXIV.

How sweetly from the village come the sounds
Of children thronging from the village school!
How merrily they intertwine, and make
The air itself seem sensitive with joy!
How softly sounds the labourer's long-drawn call
To straying flocks, as down the valley rings
The tinkling bell with a loud, homeward chime!
The dying carols of the birds how sweet!
Through the still air the hum of insect life!
Or chirp of early crickets in the fields!
All rising up like Nature's evening hymn.
If there's a time among all other times,
When, with an influence sensible, we feel
Our spirits drawn above, and, as we muse

On Jacob's ladder, can almost expect
To see the vision realized, and Earth
In palpable communion with its God,
It is at closing of a day like this—
A long, resplendent, beauteous summer's-day!
I never then can gaze on such a scene,
So filled with beauty temperate—so framed
To fill the soul with sadness, and yet make
That sadness sweeter than all pleasure is,
But all its inspiration like a stream
Breaks on my heart, and overflows it quite;
All memories of past years I quite forget,
Like dissipation of a fevered dream;
The world's dark history vanishes from me
Like a lost memory; the world itself
Looks like an infant child just kneeling down
In adoration's attitude to pay
A last orison to the setting sun,
Whose dying beams like golden ladders seem
Descending upon earth; the skies become
With angel-presence luminous and bright,
And all around me laden is the air
With blessings that are almost audible.

XXV.

But lo!
As to the eastern hemisphere I turn,
And mark the solemn grandeur of the scene,

Reflections sadder and sublimer rise,
More suited to the pageant of this hour.
How clear and how significant a type
Of Time and of Eternity is now
Foreshadowed by this eventide to man!
Beyond the mountain barrier of those clouds,
That with their shadows *pall-like* seem to fall
Upon a world just coffined in the past,
How may imagination picture forth,
In endless distance thick'ning as they rise,
And spread in rows of everlasting gloom,
The heaped-up graves of all humanity!
Of generations that have lived and gone,
Of all that now or shall hereafter breathe,
Until they seem to reach creation's brink,
And touch at Chaos! How readily
May we believe that in that eastern sky,
Whereon chaotic darkness seems to brood,
Is typified the ending of the world!
And in those clouds so thickly gathering round,
The drawing of Time's curtain over all
Its crimes, its sorrows, and its destinies!
While in the western hemisphere that gleams
With such poetic radiance, clearer still
The dream of Heaven may be realized!
There may we fancy that Eternity
Its long and blissful reign has just commenced;
For *there* all breathes of everlasting peace;
The clouds are buried in the deep blue air
Elysian-like; and round those glowing isles

Stirs not the faintest wind, or wave of sound:
Of spirits just immortalized they seem
The new discovered homes; almost we might
In glorious bands believe we see them roam,
And treading with a shadow-lighted step
The shores enamelled with eternal flowers!

O! that this glorious pageant could but gain
Perfection from a voice! O! that it might
Reveal itself in language unto me!
And yet how vain and foolish is that wish;
For though all *soundless* is the rolling world,
Though nothing *audibly* proclaims to us
The consummation of our rest is near;
The stars are silent—Nature is all dumb;
Though ever calm and passionless may seem
To beat the pulse of the material world,
For us whose hearts are throbbing quick with hope;
Yet still we feel without us as within
That all things recognize *Progression's law;*
And through our lives as we go dreaming on,
And with the glimmerings of our reason faint
Endeavour vainly to elucidate
The mystic problem of Futurity,
Time with *indifferent* footsteps marches on,
And with a silent hand unravels it.
As it may happen oftentimes to us
Within a midnight chamber to sit down,
And long and deeply ponder o'er the fire,
Weaving strange fancies with the curious flames,

Till all *unconsciously* the night be spent,
And thro' the casement where the pale stars shone
The bright surprising of the morning gleams.

XXVI.

Though dread, mysterious Past! Of ages fled
Gigantic Grave, and Burial-place sublime!
Who from the present moment, as it were
The brink of some ever-yawning gulph,
On thy sepulchral continent can gaze,
And know not the solemnity that's due
To all imaginations solemn?
There in that awful and mysterious land,
Whose sun has sunk for ever, and wherein
Silence and solitude twin monarchs reign,
Vaulted by everlasting night—are raised
The boundless catacombs of a ruined world!
There Babylon the magnificent, Tyre
And Sidon the rich, Nineveh the old,
Palmyra, Balbec, Edom, and Gomorrah,
And all the far-famed cities of the past,
As in an earthquake are quite engulphed,
Save some few mounds which rise as if in dreams
Still heaved the buried city, and o'er which
The lion prowls in solitude!
There all the monuments of Assyrian pride—
Palaces—terrace-rising to the sky,
Within whose star-roofed halls Belshazzar ruled,

In all the splendour of barbaric wealth;—
And gorgeous temples, in whose solemn courts
Stood wondrous Idols, and awe-piercing Gods,
And the dark Magi held their magic rites—
Lie crumbled into ruin; and, where once
Have heaved and rolled the waves of human life,
Myriads of pagan worshippers have knelt
In adoration to the sun and stars,
These everlasting orbs are shining down,
Unwatched as in a wilderness. *There* too
The Patriarchs lie, the fathers of the world,
With hoary heads crowned with a weight of years,
In sleep of soundest hope! and at their feet,
Like puny children of an hour's breath,
Their after sons are laid! *There* Nations too
Who in successive birth have swayed this sphere,
In sole dominion or in rivalry,
Whose tramp but yesterday seemed shaking earth,
There all lie fettered in one common chain,
And all agree in silence!
There Tyrants, Statesmen, and Philosophers—
Meteors of an hour, luminaries of an age—
Who never met before, or meeting, clashed,—
There Queens as haughty as Palmyra's boast,
Whose beauty-tempered majesty was once
The polar-star of ancient Chivalry—
There dazzling Courtezans and fiery Knights,
Whose glowing loves once trembled o'er the lyres
Of fame-forgotten and now voiceless bards—
There all the warring Victors of each age,

Cæsars of modern or of marvel old,
Who with their great achievements and their steps
Sanguined with useless gore, have ever shed
A lurid grandeur o'er their brow of Time—
There all the bright Inheritors of fame,
Who like *colossal phantoms* glare on us
From their historic thrones—all twinned in death,
Together *there* in one vast tomb are laid,
And there are packed, and jumbled in such state,
One handful of white dust from out that heap
May neighbour all the wonders of a world!

As the dark ocean's ever-heaving wave
Rolls fretful on, and dashes into spray;
Or as the sparks from some volcanic mount
Shoot meteor-like, and fall to ash again,
So spring to life th' human generations,
All, all to end in dust upon death's shore!
While o'er this brief-drawn, everchanging-heath,
This rise and decadence of earthly state,
This burial endless of humanity,
Nature's soft cheek glows with perpetual bloom,
Awes their young childhood, lights their onward
years,
And smiles in sadness o'er their heaped-up graves!

XXVII.

Another day declines, and now the world
Has grown a little older, and yet bears
No trace of age upon its verdant brow.
Those long and pleasant shadows, which have marked
The gradual flight of noontide's sunny hours,
And, breeze-stirred, given to secluded vales,
And dark, unpeopled nooks, a semblant life,
Are with the sunlight all departed now:
To-morrow—and all Nature will arise
As fresh, and green, and beautiful, as though
She ne'er had added to her age this day,
And never felt the hollow tramp of Time.
Not so for man will close this eventide;
For now the sense of sorrow which this day
Has fallen like to darkness on the heart
For the first time experienced, will not pass
Away like those sweet shadows on the fields,
But evermore will leave a trace behind,
Whose rude impression years may fainter make,
But never altogether can efface.
And now the first slight wrinkle which has been
Plough'd on the youthful brow this day by care,
Unlike those fleeting shadows will remain
Till others in their turn accumulate,
And death shall soften every furrow down.
To all humanity has this day brought
A change without volition of their own;

For all with helpless movement have been led
A little nearer to that final coast,
Which terminates all human wand'rings,
Where rolls that deep, unknown, mysterious sea,
And that all shoreless ocean doth resound,
Whose wave to us is murmurless, but which
In echoes faintly seems to reach us.
Some children have been born into the world,
This strange, eventful world, to figure there
Like actors in a dream; the Boy has grown
Nearer to Youth, and thrown away some toy;
To Manhood, Youth, while on his bounding path
Some bubble hope has broken without sound;
Manhood from Age has borrowed some grey hairs;
Old age has tottered nearer to the grave,
And some this day have taken on Death's wing
Their everlasting and mysterious flight,
Beyond the camps of this unsettled life,
Beyond the love, the hate, the care of all;
And to all mortal knowledge may have passed
The furthest boundary of the furthest star!

XXVIII.

How solemn and affecting are the thoughts
The faintest mention of the dead awake!
However joyously the heart's pulse may beat,
It saddens in a moment, when the chord
Is struck that answers to their memories.

For those, indeed, to whom the dead are dear,
Altogether can they never die;
For though from us they visibly depart,
Still to the senses only do they make
Their forms invisible: for they become
A part of all that's beautiful; they leave
As it were shadows of themselves behind,—
A voice, an echo—something which still speaks
Of them tho' they be gone. There are few things
Of use the most familiar that in life
They've touched and handled, but retain the seal
Of their impression; there is no pageant
Beautiful in Nature which they loved
But beauty gains from them; there is no spot
Their footsteps may have frequented but seems
As it were holy ground. On the mute wall
Their portraits hang with half-dissevered lips,
Ready to speak. By the vacated hearth
The chair familiar stands with arms outstretched
For its old occupant; and round the lute,
Companion whilom of the departed,
Still lingering seems the spirit of some air,
Remembered now in sadness, but which once
Fell on our ears in vain. The very trees
Beneath whose shade the dead have sat with us—
The fields that in their company we've roamed—
The cottage-door, or garden-gate through which
On life's familiar errands they have passed—
The chambers which they once inhabited,
Where danced their ev'ning shadows with our own,

Even the very walls possess to us
Associations beautiful, and seem
Unto the heart affectionate transformed
To *sensitive* memorials of the dead.
In all the mournful tokens of decay
We see pervading the material world—
The dying glories of each dying year,
Of every season the transition sad,
The fading flowers, and the falling leaves,
The solemn pageant of the setting sun,
The brilliant vanishing of the clouds at Eve,
The still departure of the twilight glow,—
Nature, the general parent of us all,
But seems endeavouring to perpetuate
Her long-lost children's memories, and to call
Upon the living to remember them,
And fan the embers of forgotten love.
The stars, though ever taciturn to us,
Beam with a *bright significance*, as if
Their spirits were receptacled within,
And with a tremulous and shining hand,
Up to their homes of everlasting peace,
Did beckon thither those that tarried here.
Yea, all this bright, material universe
Is but one gorgeous sepulchre, wherein
Imagination doth embalm the dead,
And where the living in a prayerful band,
May stand like Mary at the Saviour's tomb,
And hold communion voiceless, till they join
Their congregation holy!

XXIX.

It is this self-same feeling, or a part
Of that the dead beget in us, which, raised
From individual unto general things,
From objects lesser to sublimer ones,
Creates our veneration for the Past,
Our solemn reverence for antiquity.
For after all why do we thus embalm
The memories of the dead in our fond hearts?
It is because they are removed from us;
That Time has led them by the hand, and placed
Their outlines at a distance, and though still
On these we ponder, never more we feel
In life *upon equality* with them.
Within the dark veil of Eternity
They've passed before us, and have thus become,
A portion of th' invisible, a part
Of all we deem incomprehensible!
Therefore unto them we feel ourselves
Attracted with strange influence; therefore too
The softest feelings of the heart take root
Around the dead, and unto them build up
A temple of still worship and of love.
And so it is with nations as with men,
Who've flourished long before us, and have played
Their part in this life's drama, and then made
With *soundless* footsteps their departure:
Upon Time's rapid stream were they borne down

Into the vale of *distance*, and then Night
Fell on their history, and they thus became
Gigantic shadows of a ruined world!
The things the most contemptible that come
Charged with the weight of years, from them to us,
We hold as sacred symbols of the past;
All that imagination can conceive
Of dark or solemn, startling or sublime,
We press into one moment, when we think
Upon their mighty destinies, and feel
Th' awful mystery of their disappearance;
At once we pay unto the mighty dead
The homage that is due to them from life;
Our being to mere nothingness doth shrink,
As all the shades of pre-humanity
Before us pass reviewed: our breath becomes
But a mere vapour breath'd upon Time's glass
Which straight is clear again; and, we confessed,
But meteors of a dark and troublous sky,
Where all is constant change!
Thus are we taught
By teachings the most sacred in this life—
The lapse of Time and agency of death,
The monuments of nations, and the graves
Of individuals simple as ourselves—
To solemnize the heart for Nature's change;
And through the glimpses that we now and then
Catch of the world's antiquity, to lead
Our spirits up to him who is the fount
Eternal of all ages, and with whom
Humility is all that we can feel.

XXX.

Music in the air! and from a lute!
Blest be the hidden minstrel for those tones!
So soft, so clear, deliciously outbreathed,
The very leaves seem trembling with delight,
And from yon sky where all the amber clouds
Like vast aerial organs are upbuilt,
Seems pouring forth the spirit of the day
A farewell symphony down unto the world;
Fit close indeed to such a day as this.
O! Music—Melody, or whatsoe'er
The name by mortals unto thee be given,
What magic sweetness in thine art is found!
Man should all but worship thee, for thou art
To him *the voice of all that's beautiful!*
Interpreter of his impassioned soul!
His spirit's *audible* revelation!
Thou art the echo of an angel's tongue.
On earth our best Divinity!—yet more,
The only link resounding of that chain,
Which doth connect humanity with those,
Whose essences are purer than we dream,
Yet stoop to us in language such as thine!
Thou art Infinitude's expression too!
For in thine everlasting scale of sound
Is comprehended all that we believe
Of joy or sufferance ever can exist,
All that we imagine there can be

Of present being or of future change.
Unbounded Pity, and unbounded Hope,—
Sublimest Passion, and sublimest Love,—
Sorrow the most angelic and profound,—
The fire of all Enthusiasm—the faith
And courage of devoted martyrdom—
The depths of joy most thrilling and acute—
The balmiest sense of everlasting peace—
God's veriest attributes themselves, become
Dimly significant through thee, and by
The deep pulsations of thy voice divine
Translated seems Divinity itself!
Thus dreamt at least some old philosophers,
Who fell asleep with music on their lips.

XXXI.

But see! now falls prophetically bright
Of resurrection on a future morn,
The sun's last blaze; and, at his kingly rest,
Cloud upon cloud, Ossa-like, empiled,
With shadowy glories the horizon fire;
While o'er the irradiant and still earth,
In vale, on ocean, and on mountain peak,
In contemplation musing myriads pause,
And trace its hallowed memory in the skies.

XXXII.

So farewell, Nature, since the day is done!
In my sweet walk with thee some flowers I've culled
Whose fragrance may outlive me, and perchance
Obtain a lasting perfume, but which will
Sweeten at least the remnant of my life.
Though homeward bound, yet often shall I pause
To hear thy lingering echoes, and repeat
"Farewell! dear Nature—once again, Farewell!"
Now soon will twilight sober all this scene,
And every village sound be hushed in peace.
Soon will the winds, like airy ministers,
A requiem chant for the departed day.
Soon will the dark'ning foliage of the trees
Grow strange and solemn, and the tombstones stand
Like spectral things to fright the homeward swain.
Soon will old ocean's melancholy wave
Roll all unnoticed to the desert beach.
Soon will the fisher on the lonely lake
Commend above his frail bark and himself;
Soon will the nightingale's sweet chaunt be heard
In groves pine-dark'ned, and young lovers meet
To blend their voices softer than its own.
Soon will the watch-dog howl upon his guard,
The owlet answer hooting from his tower.
Soon will the sufferer see the pale moon break
His half-drawn curtains thro' with floods of light,
And dream of resignation while it glides

Like sainted pilgrim on its lonely path.
Soon blacker still the train of night will fall;
The stars, as with a coronet of gems,
Circle the dark brow of this Ethiop Queen,
Who like a tender mother will first kiss
Her baby earth to sleep, and then will Time
Dissolve like mist into Eternity,
And God o'er all the universe keep watch.

MUSIC.

A FRAGMENT.

OH! thou great magnet of the Spirit World—
Music—how much I love thee! not indeed
With rapturous sighs, or with impassioned tears,
But with a voiceless, reverential love;
I hymn thee in the silence of my heart,
And with such worship as I offer up
To thy Almighty Fount, who lies cloud-veil'd
Beyond the glorious sunrise, upon hills
Crown'd with an everlasting verdure, whence
Into the vales of this dark-moaning world
Thou pourest down a deluge of sweet sounds.
Oh! oft at starlight in a tranced mood
Such melancholy music have I heard,
Or thought to hear—wave after plaintive wave,
Poured down from airy, melody-fed lips,
Or chord-eternal instrument, and of
Such deep, seraphic tenderness, that all
The dark woods seem enchanted, and the winds
Drooped to a soft attention, and methought
Some saddest spirit from his far-off home—
An uncompanioned and unworshipped star,
In the dark blue, all sisterless—to me
Had wail'd his lonely immortality.

And frequent too upon a summer eve,
Lapp'd in a calm beatitude, with gaze
Fixed on the burning skies—I've thought to catch
A swell of music clear, and so divine,
And of such perfect ravishment, I could
Have swoon'd with pleasure; and the clouds all
seemed
To sudden open, like the portals bright
Of some vast temple, and therein to shine
Ecstatic Angels, o'er their glowing lyres
Chaunting a favourite hymn.
Ah! sweet were death,
If dying gently to a dying song—
From loving lips, and to a farewell strain,
Cadenced by Beauty's hand o'er lulling strings,
Upon thine airy pinions we might mount,
And far away flit thro' the moonlit air
Up to some starry orb, and thereon throned,
For ever sing, our spirits their own lyres,
And singing ever, ever more replete
Eternity, oh Music! with but thee.

LINES

WRITTEN AFTER READING KEAT'S "ENDYMION."

I.

HOW sweet upon a summer sea,
Heaving itself reposingly,
All moon-lit round, to float and float,
Rocked in some capricious boat
Most gently and melodiously!

II.

To lie within the hollow wave
Without a fear, and only crave
To drink from out the starry night
The same poetic, holy light,
Diana to Endymion gave.

III.

Far, far away, and more and more
To float and float, from every shore,
Upon the wide sea's wide expanse,
Beneath Diana's radiant glance
Bespangling all the wat'ry floor.

IV.

To float and float, and mark the cloud
Around her throw its amorous shroud,

Whiter than foam or pearly shell,
As if it would the goddess tell
With beaming lips to sing aloud.

V.

To sing of those religious days
When worshipped were her maiden rays,
And from her lonely throne above
She stooped to gain a mortal's love,
And yearned for more than poet's praise.

VI.

Thus beneath her lids calm-streaming,
How sweet to float, and fall a-dreaming
Of every old poetic God
That to the Grecian wave and sod
Ever lent romantic meaning:

VII.

And hearken unto magic singing—
Voices from the deep upbringing
In eloquent and charmed rhyme,
Sweet echoes of departed Time,
Ever with fresh music ringing.

VIII.

To dream and dream, and float and float,
And listen to the Triton's note,
And to the Nereid's loving call,
Far following from her ocean-hall
The amber gliding of the boat.

IX.

Or, on the still clouds gazing, where
They shut the billows in, and there
Build airy isles with many a bridge,
And snow-white cape, and mountain ridge,
Pavilion'd in the moonlit air.

X.

To dream that Saturn old and gray
A moment flings his scythe away,
And looking *thence* with streaming eye
O'er the still earth, and stiller sky,
Grows weary of his wand'ring way:

XI.

And all the beauty of the night
His sad heart overflowing quite,
Becomes so trancéd, that on the soft
And pillowy bed of clouds aloft,
He lays him down and sleeps outright.

XII.

And, while he lies a-sleeping sound,
To dream that spins the world around,
Backward thro' long centuries past,
Until the lovely age at last
Of bright mythology be found.

XIII.

And then that to their long-lost home,
Determined never more to roam,

Flock back the old Divinities,
And with their bright humanities
Repeople all this starry dome.

XIV.

Ah, thus to float most sweet would be!
As if we breathed immortally,
And were, in truth, ourselves among
That beautiful and spirit throng
Which once ruled earth so blissfully.

XV.

And such a voyage as this one,
Reading o'er thy grand Endymion,
Beloved Keats, I've made with thee;
Ah! would to God together we
Our journey all thro' life had gone.

CHANGE OF HOME.

I.

CLOSE the windows and door,
Make the hearth glow red,
For the long day is o'er,
And its voice hath fled.

II.

The deep shades are trailing
Along the cold ground,
And spirits are wailing
In the wind's low sound.

III.

The moon walks not on high,
No star shoots its ray,
But the dark clouds sail by,
And warn us away.

IV.

Away to our glad rest
Where all things have flown,
Like the bird to its nest,
All save *her* alone.

V.

Who has left home and friend,
And the warm daylight;
And has gone now to spend
A long, wintry night.

VI.

Where the keen winds shall rave,
And the deep snow fall,
But, where laid in her grave,
She's colder than all.

VII.

Never more on her bed
Of soft down shall rest
Those fair limbs that in lead
Are stiffly impressed.

VIII.

Her dress for the ev'ning
Is simple and meet,
The only thing gleaming
Is her winding-sheet.

IX.

Her closed eyes are sinking,
And hollows are there;
Her lips are fast drinking
The dark, coffin'd air.

X.

Her pale face is waning
'Neath corruption's breath,
And strange hues fast gaining,
Known only in death.

XI.

Tho' all those have flown
Who deem'd her their pride,
They've not left her alone,
She'll soon be a bride;

XII.

For around her will cling
The cold, eager worm;
And this fond, church-yard king
She'll not care to spurn.

XIII.

And forms that now moulder,
Whose coffins are rust,
Will soon turn to fold her
In skeleton dust.

XIV.

No more—let us leave her
In her home so strange;
Nothing else can grieve her,
It is her last change.

A LAMENTATION.

I.

OH! mocking world, and hollow sounding time,
Built up of doubt and pain,
Have ye no voice nor echo more sublime,
Something that is not vain?

II.

All incense streaming from your altar-stone
Is empty as the smoke,
That, curling upward, to the wind is thrown,
And into thin air broke.

III.

Each breath that issues from our lips but tells
Our breathing time in brief;
We are for ever sounding our own knells,
Till the last throbs relief.

IV.

Our life is but the shadow that death throws,
As we reflect our own;
Death comes—the shadow trembles, and then goes,
Whither is all unknown.

v.

We gaze upon the sun-set's clouds, and pine
To follow them—alas!
For ever gaze, yet ever fear the line
No mortal can repass.

vi.

The stars we read until they seem to say,
Distinctly to our hearts,
Come!—but betwixt us and their streaming ray,
Death like a curtain starts.

vii.

Oh! world roll smoothly with us while we climb
Thy hills, and pass away;
Leave us a little time to rest—a little time
To look around and pray.

viii.

Give us, oh sun! a death-bed like thine own
As radiant and as still;
Oh! leave us not alone, all, all alone,
To the dark sense of ill.

ix.

Ye stars! that with the pale moon form the crown,
And diadem of night;
Shine brightly at that hour, and stoop down
To guide us on our flight.

X.

Oh, death! release us kindly from a life
We ask not to retain;
Snap the last chord of agony and strife,
Gently and without pain.

XI.

Upon our eyelids from thy clay-cold hands
Drop down the slumbrous balms!
Then bear—oh! bear us to the meridian lands,
The everlasting palms.

PHILOSOPHY AND LOVE.

I.

AY! it is glorious perhaps to draw our breath
As the old sages did in times of old,
And by their deep philosophy grow cold
To the changes of this earth, and the crowning fear
of death.

II.

To wrap ourselves in deep sublimity,
And let our mortal bark glide down the tide
Of human life, unto the ocean wide—
The soundless, heaveless ocean of all antiquity.

III.

To stand, as our first parent must have done,
Upon the shore of the undeluged world,
And contemplate the starry host unfurl'd
For the first brilliant night, and the young moon's
race just run.

IV.

Or feel upon the paradisal sod
The first, fresh breezes fan us with delight,
And, in the splendour of the new-born light,
See all the fair, young Earth, bow before us as its
God.

V.

And then from Eden's Paradise outcast,
With an imagination most sublime
To travel thro' the star-crown'd Arch of Time,
And wake to living foam all the Dead Sea of the Past.

VI.

To give the warm breath of animation
To the old Hebrew race, and their old foes,
Startling the Pharaohs from their long repose,
And the fiery throb of life to ev'ry sleeping Nation.

VII.

Before those marvellous, Egyptian Kings,
And as within their very palaces,
To stand—gazing on their living faces,
Whom the Pyramids entomb, embalm'd with costly things.

VIII.

Of whom the dark-recorded life and name,
But whisper'd thro' the galleries of Time,
Roll echoes downward awful and sublime,
And shed the halo round of a misty phantom fame.

IX.

Or, by the lightning on Sinai's brow,
To see together gather'd the whole tribe
Of Israelites, extending far and wide,
And mark that wondrous race o'er the world all scattered now.

X.

To kneel with the Fire-worshippers of old,
With Zoroaster and the Persian race;
And hail with an enthusiastic face
Their glorious God of light as His eastern car up-roll'd.

XI.

Or with the Magi and Chaldean seers,
While Time is young, to stand at midnight's hour
Beneath the stars, and with their wondrous pow'r
Believe we can foreshadow the darkly coming years.

XII.

Beneath the cedar-shades of Lebanon,
Attending to some patriarchal sage,
To hear the problems curious of his age,
And all the glorious voices of the Prophets ringing on.

XIII.

With Socrates or Plato the divine,
To deify the intellect of man
By penetration into Nature's plan,
And earnestly with them trace the worlds that count-less shine.

XIV.

By the monuments of Latin Empire,
Some fallen column, or a grass-grown mound,
To sit, and mark the desolation round,
And muse on all the ashes left of Rome's extin-guish'd fire.

XV.

To muse and muse until the spirit burns
With wonder at the brevity of ill,
And draws a God-like stedfastness of will
From all the whiten'd hearts calmly sleeping in their urns.

XVI.

Hearts long ago that on the world's dark waves
Heaved as our own do, restless and in pain,
Till all its billows roll'd o'er them in vain,
And for evermore at length broke foamless round their graves.

XVII.

Graves whereupon the flick'ring lamp of fame,
As moonbeams on white monuments at night,
Shines with a tremulous and ghostly light,
And shows how insufficient—only to leave a name!

XVIII.

To learn from all traditions dark and old
The mystic wonders of each mystic age;
From History's more illuminated page
The wondrous wealth of knowledge its pages all unfold.

XIX.

And thus to arm with fortitude the mind,
By contemplating calmly every change,
And piercing through Intelligence's range,
And scorn the waves of trouble that rock all human kind.

XX.

And then at anchor, and with sails all furl'd,
And hair grown white in this research of science,
To challenge Fortune with a rude defiance,
To make or mar his peace—whose experience is—
the world.

XXI.

Ay! this is glorious; but even with all this
There comes a moment when our wisdom fails,
And then the cold Philosopher bewails
That all his pride of knowledge has gained so little bliss.

XXII.

A painting of Italia's sunny skies,
Picturing by some blue lake a life-long rest,
May serve to wake this feeling in his breast,
And a strange moisture shed o'er the lids of his calm eyes.

XXIII.

Or when, perchance, some dark infirmity
Shatters the stately pillars of his mind,
And makes him in his suffering moments find
How vain for man to be 'bove his own humanity!

XXIV.

Or it may be some old familiar strain,
The simple beauty of a household song,
He hears rough-caroll'd by a peasant throng,
While gleams the ruddy fire through the broken cabin-pane.

XXV.

Then all his dark experience falls asleep,
And he wakes only to life's cheerless gloom,
And looks around upon his vacant room,
And then wonders how he could such lonely vigils keep.

XXVI.

Ah! then afresh come welling up the springs
Of all those feelings long pent under ground,
Which, when they pour forth with their natural sound,
Some comfort even give to the heart's most broken strings.

XXVII.

They all well up with bitter, restless foam,
Those lovely springs which might have green'd his path
So harshly trod—and lent to his lone hearth
The music of Affection—the sweet solace of Home.

XXVIII.

He yearns, as in his childhood long ago,
That loving, tender faces at the door
Could meet him, stepping lightly on the floor,
And recompense him sweetly for all that he doth know.

XXIX.

An overflowing of two hearts in one,
As wedded fountains in each other fall;

Two spirits bound in love electrical—
Such dreams as these come back, though his dreaming age has gone.

XXX.

Some perhaps may ask the purport of this rhyme,
It is this truth—that soon the day of grace
For Love and Passion flees our short-youth'd race,
And when this day hath fled, melt the rainbows sweet of Time.

XXXI.

That not the cold and arid life of Thought
Becomes alone the contemplative mind,
For soon the pride of Intellect must find
That all its glorious treasures were far too dearly bought.

XXXII.

That though vast learning garner'd here below
May help us to philosophize on pain,
God has not made domestic ties in vain,
But from Love's simple source bade Life's sweetest pleasures flow.

XXXIII.

And though pure knowledge is a beauteous zone,
Which doth contain most things within its fold,
Still every heart a secret chord doth hold,
Which, unprevented, waits to discover its sweet tone.

XXXIV.

And if this chord rough-silenced should remain,
And to Love's music in its youth be dumb,
It never altogether can benumb,
But grows, with time corroding, an instrument of pain.

THE MUSICIAN'S DYING INVOCATION.

I.

OH! my beloved, turn thy midnight eyes
Upon me ere I die;
One last, fond look ere yet my spirit flies—
One glance of sympathy.

II.

Lean on thy harp, and 'mid the thrilling strings,
Oh! let thy fingers play;
That on sweet melody's divinest wings
I may be borne away.

III.

From thy pure lips, oh! let some wild song flow,
That which I used to love,
That I may bear its echoes with me now
Up to the realms above.

IV.

Oh! my beloved—music in the air!
Music from unknown hands,
Did'st thou not hear it? Angels must be there —
Angels in myriad bands!

V.

Hark! once again it swells, and with thine own
All, all around one floats;
It comes, it comes from God's immediate throne,
So spirit-like the notes.

VI.

Oh! my beloved, farewell! ne'er again
My lips with thine shall meet;
I sink—I die, and yet I feel no pain,
Death like to this is sweet.

VII.

For every sense to ecstacy is giv'n—
The ecstacy of sound;
And waves of music o'er my spirit driven,
In which I'm almost drown'd.

VIII.

Oh! farewell! farewell! from my vision steals
The beauty of thy form;
And like Elijah on his chariot wheels
I feel myself upborne;

Borne with the music of thy voice along,
Ever from thee far, oh! far,
Floats my Spirit like a star,
Upon the wings of that Angelic throng,
And down to some green land of everlasting song!

A MOOD.

I KNOW not how it is, but there are times
When, like a calm cloud stealing to the sky,
There comes upon my spirit a still mood
Or phase of mind so tranquil that it seems
The *moonlight* of deep Thought. So beautiful,
And rare as beautiful, that I will now
Describe it ere it sets on me for aye.
Almost it is a pause from thought, wherein
Reason is nothing, and the Heart is all.
It is a mood in which I can extract
From Life its *pure quintessence, and the rest*
Of life resolve into oblivion.
'Tis Meditation's hermitage—a sort
Of intellectual harbour where I may
Repose myself heart-wearied, and there glass
My spirit in the waters quietly:
From whence the round horizon of my life
Seems through the far-off retrospect of years
Like a calm sunset, and all Time itself
One long, autumnal avenue appears
Thro' which I've travell'd slowly, and have heaped
Rich memories leaf-like.
It is, in short, a mood in which of all

That I possess of knowledge, garnered up
From study of myself or of the world,
Nothing remains to me but the beautiful.

I cannot force my spirit to the bent
Of this delicious dream, for it awakes
Itself into existence suddenly,
Or by some one resounding of those links
That chain the Present and the Past together,
Or of those tender and harmonic chords
That wake the heart's relationship with hearts
Long mouldered into dust, or by perchance
The stir of those grand sympathies which lead
Our gaze electrically to the stars,
And through the medium of these Aladdins
That with their lamps imperishably bright
Illumine the void wilderness of air,
And all material emblems shaping forth
Dimly the Beautiful to us—such as
Sun, Moon, Wind, Cloud, Ocean, Mountain-top,
Stream, Lake, Field, Flower, Forest-tree, that bind
Our Spirits to the World invisible!

In such a mood my heart dreams of itself,
Unravelling all its age, as though in Sleep
Where life is but a thought, and, dreaming, lets
Pour in like Sunbeams through an airy chink
Best memories of its best experience.
The balmy breath of far-off summer times,
And all delicious perfumes ever woke
From dewy boughs, green leaves and pastured grass,

And flowers long since scattered to the wind;
Pale adumbrations of dear features lost,
And old familiar faces gone from earth;
Sweet recollected music, chiming in
With voice as sweet, borne far away from me
On the remorseless winds of circumstance;
Dark emerald vales, deep glens and quiet brooks,
Pine-bridged, where I have sat through golden noons,
As from a gorgeous chalice drinking in
The beauty of the whole material world,
And dreamt myself a God—Habitations
Whose isolated shelter from the world,
And dear remembered chambers have become
The Sepulchres of calm and peaceful days;
Most lonely shores, and unfrequented sands,
Where only heart-companion'd I have watch'd
Delicious sunsets upon balmiest eves,
Or golden moonrise over calmest waves;
Far village graves where lie forerunning friends,
Guardian'd by some old church, with all around
As silent and as peaceful as themselves—
Each green oasis of my life, and all
The landmarks the most beautiful of Time,
In this delicious mood all, all rise up,
Uprise before me panorama-like,
Not singly, one by one, but all at once,
As in the resurrection we shall do.

And thus while like to moon-light on the waves,
Calm-tranced waves, are mirrored to my heart
All scenes and groupings sweet of yesterday,

Resurging too with the resurging Past,
Return again old feelings of old hours,
And all emotions evermore to me born
From Love, from Beauty and Religion pure.
The memories most musical of Home,
Of speculations childish over hearths
Familiar once but flame-abandoned now;
The prayers sent Heavenward with the purest breath
In days when it was innocence to be;
All dreams romantic and poetical,
And aspirations lofty that the breath
Of tender Spring, or Summer's visitation,
Or Autumn's mellow glory, ever woke;
The starry reminiscences of nights
By rapt communion memorable made,
By sad complainings to the moon, or to
Old trees in the white moonlight looking wan;
All silent and unutterable hymns
Of adoration, up to Nature breath'd,
In the deep voiceless hush of ecstasy;
All passionate adieus to buried friends,
And fine imaginings of the lovely dead—
All these—the recollections shadowy
Of a most golden, evanescent prime—
These lost emotions tender and divine,
In this delicious mood resurge on me,
Like apparitions beautiful of thought,
As at one deep pulsation of the heart,
In one long, calm and retrospective swell,
And blending imperceptibly, create
A rainbow of rich feelings so complete,

So soft and so unutterably sweet,
That brineless tears out-tremble from mine eyes,
And were I to die then, I must indeed
Meet Death a-smiling.—

I know not whether rare or frequent be
Such moods with most, but when on me they come,
Then and *then* only I know happiness;
For far above all human ignorance
I seem to soar, and with prophetic glance
The all of life to comprehend at once,
Its course, its meaning and its destiny.
One most omnipotent and delicious wind
Freshens my spirit, and within me wakes
A pulse most perfect of poetic faith:
Clear as a summer sky grows Time, and then
As I look through it on the world, I see
All shadows from all clouds pass quite away,
And to mine overflowing eyes it seems
All stain'd with glory like cathedral panes.
I feel the faith poetic that there is
Hidden far more within the womb of life
Than life on its mere surface now reveals;
A deep conviction that its waters run
Profounder far than ever plummet yet
Of moralist or of philosopher
Has sounded, or than the burning heart
Of Poet fathom'd; and that there must be
As in the natural element, beneath
This sea of all Humanity, this vast
And *blood-waved Ocean* which appears to heave

So dark with thunder passion, and the scum
Of weed heap'd thick on weed, most gentle waves—
As pure and clear a living under tide
As ever flow'd within the sinless hearts
Of those who drank the Paradisal air,
And those untainted breezes to the full
Which still we feel blow faintly o'er the world
In Love and Poesy.
To sum indeed
All vantage that I gather from this mood,
Described most faintly, if described at all,
I draw from thence this creed most comforting,
That—spite of all our pall-like miseries,
The war of our two essences, the dark
And strange-perplexing accidents which shed
Upon our paths such bitterness, and make
Most pray, some few despair, and all to fear—
The tendency of life is beautiful!
And when that silent chronicler, gray Time
Shall close his starry eyes upon the world,
Resolved to its chaotic elements,
And meekly to Jehovah merciful
Shall render up its history—I believe
With all an Angel's eloquence that He
Will plead aloud these attributes of Man—
His vague mysterious yearning after what
He deemed to be sublimity,—his deep
And star-directed impulse to attain
To something that was permanently good—
His constant aspiration God-toward.

To M. A.

I.

DEAR M—y! It is only meet
A Poet lingering at thy feet,
Should love in Poesy;
And plead—while join'd in thine his hands,
In the best tongue he understands,
For his felicity.

II.

That thou should'st be my willing bride,
Nothing my simple love beside
Have I to offer thee;
What God has made me morally,
And graced me intellectually,
This do I proffer thee.

III.

—A Spirit in its will sublime,
Aged by the world before its time,
From others most apart;—
A heart sear'd with a secret pain,
Longing to be made young again
In thy dear, maiden heart.

IV.

And what, my love, would I return
For thy acceptance, and how earn
Thy life-long constancy?
But that devotion which alone
The Poet's inmost heart can own
With such strange fervency.

V.

I would be to thee what is meant,
Methinks, by Nature's Sacrament,
Retraceable above;
A union in my heart of all
Those tender sympathies we call
Diversities of Love.

VI.

One in whom Religion's meekness
Had tempered down to gentleness
All harshness that would spring
From larger knowledge, and whose eyes
Would try to lead thee to the skies,
Upon Example's wing.

VII.

A type of that protecting care
Which God in secresy doth bear
To all Humanity;
And, warmly to express myself,
A far-off shadow of Himself
Would I be unto thee.

VIII.

Trusting thy destiny with fear
To me—I will so shield thee here
From sorrow's bitterness,
That every line of thy life's page,
If He permit, shall be a gage
Of future happiness.

IX.

In all things which shall appertain
To soothing of thy mortal pain,
Sent providentially,
Though I may never quite allay
All troublous winds—through me shall they
Blow o'er thee tenderly.

X.

In balmy Summer-times, my love!
Under the dark, blue sky above
We'll ramble through green lanes;
And drink the breezes as they blow
From uplands to the fields below,
Over the scented plains.

XI.

Or, seated in a shady nook,
I'll read to thee from out some book
Legends of far-off Time;
Traditions glowing with the praise
Of Saints and Heroes of old days,
And miracles sublime.

XII.

And homeward as our steps return,
And western clouds around us burn
With their chameleon hues;
My Spirit's own poetic lore
Softly into thine ear I'll pour,
As fall of summer dews.

XIII.

I'll tell thee how the Poet can,
Beings more beautiful than Man,
In this bright world descry;
—Spirits in the revelling breeze,
Or Genii in the coral seas,
And Angels in the sky:

XIV.

Till, gazing on those glowing Isles,
Thy face shall beam with sudden smiles,
Thine eyes with tears of love;
Thy bosom pant with holy fire,
Thy lips half fashion a desire
To be with God above.

XV.

A cottage wreath'd with jessamine,
And odorous with fragrant thyme,
Our resting-place shall be;
Whereto, upon the stilly air,
Nightingales from woods shall bear
Their charming minstrelsy.

XVI.

And where the Ocean's muffled roar
Shall reach to us for evermore,
Sounding eloquently;
And speak of Him in its deep tones,
Who dwells in those mysterious zones
We call Eternity.

XVII.

Thus, sweetly sheltered, while we sail,
Removed from every worldly gale,
Adown Life's tranquil tide,
Full many a dear, familiar chime
From rising tongues I hope that Time
May ring at our fire-side.

XVIII.

And what, my love, if on the wall
Our wedded shadows only fall
In the calm, twilight flame;
Together in the purple skies
We'll watch the amber moon arise
Through the dim window frame:

XIX.

Or some lone star intensely bright
We'll gaze at, quiv'ring through the night,
Most earnestly and clear;
Until our hearts spontaneous say,
Subdued by its magnetic ray,
Our home lies in that sphere.

xx.

And thou delicious Evenings on
Shall fill up with some simple song,
Heard oftentimes before;
And in the music of thy voice
My heart poetic shall rejoice,
And love thee more and more.

SONG.

I.

OH! I swear by all I prize,
By the gleam of sunset skies,
I'll be true to thee, Love!
By the streams and by the breeze,
By the green of summer trees,
I'll be true to thee, love!

II.

By the blue smile of the deep,
By the liquid balm of sleep,
I'll be true to thee, love!
By the pure moon's holy light,
By the starry crown of night,
I'll be true to thee, love!

III.

Oh! I swear by all most dear
To me while I tarry here,
I'll be true to thee, love!
Hark! some Spirit list'ning by,
Echoes back in fond reply,
I'll be true to thee, love!

THE HEART'S REQUIEM.

I.

OH! fevered Heart, why wilt thou heave
For ever with impatience?
Refusing alway to believe
The voice of thine Experience.

II.

What avails that thou hast trod
All thy journey hitherto,
Discovering never on Life's sod
One abiding globe of dew?

III.

But each shape of brighter land,
Turning into airy mist;
All sparkling ground to common sand,
Into dust each flower kiss'd.

IV.

If thou wilt with vain endeavour
Yearn for that which cannot be;
Foolishly for ever, ever,
Seeking here Reality.

V.

Looking like the shipwreck'd sailor
For the bark upon the main,
Coming not, although he hail her
To restore him home again.

VI.

The Clock upon the stairs has roll'd
An hour on the burden'd past;
And will the coming hour be told
Any way unlike the last?

VII.

Upon the echo of its tongue
Solemnly have pass'd away
A thousand voices from the Sun,
Vainly raging yesterday.

VIII.

And newly with the sounding Time
Many voices have been born,
That now upraise with infant chime
Carols to Life's rosy morn.

IX.

Yet well thou knowest, oh! my heart,
Prematurely that will Care
Of these sweet tones too large a part
Turn into a dark despair.

X.

A prophet of the old world said,
Wisest of the human race,
Nothing was to be expected
New beneath the Sun's bright face:

XI.

And so it is—this present scene
But serves as imitation
To what must be, and what hath been
Finds ever repetition.

XII.

Wealth and power, fame and glory,
Are but tinsel toys of Earth,
Decorating Life's sad story
With the semblance of some worth.

XIII.

Oh Heart! all that thou wouldst desire,
All for which thou now dost burn,
Will soon be ashes, and expire—
Look into that Roman Urn!

XIV.

What Martyrs of Mortality
Have not long before thee died!
Travellers of Eternity
Journey'd upon thy road-side!

XV.

If thou could'st see but truthfully,
Every spot that thou dost meet
Of verdure would appear to thee
Calcined with their burning feet.

XVI.

Thou shouldst hear each moonlit grave
To the midnight gale repine
Of mould'ring hearts whose blood-swell'd wave
Once had heaved as fierce as thine.

XVII.

Sad Heart! if for thee Life has borne
Ash heap'd on ash already,
Why look to find at each new morn
Glowing fruits upon its tree.

XVIII.

Paint with thy seared hopes each morrow;
Be thou arm'd for coming pain;
For all waves of mortal sorrow
Into waves resurge again.

XIX.

And wherefore not? since on the shore
Briefly foaming they must break;
And never shall we hear them more,
Never to this Life rewake.

XX.

And neither has the Moth of care
Survivorship of life below;
Nor we remember what we were,
In the refuge where we go.

XXI.

No mortals of their grave-clos'd scars
Retain one sharp remembrance,
No Spirits look from out the stars
Down on their old prison place.

XXII.

Rest thee then, sad heart! oh! rest thee,
If but for a little space;
Patiently, indifferently,
Waiting thine abiding place.

XXIII.

Rainbows of the Glorious Summer
Never have survived for thee,
Life has prov'd one dark December,
Let Life no more deceive thee!

XXIV.

In vain! To teach is all in vain!
Since never can this human Heart
Which once has tasted joy, remain
Satisfied with sorrow's part.

XXV.

But leaping with a vague desire
Into hope attempts to rise;
And like the sinking flame of fire
Ever flickers till it dies.

XXVI.

Oh! how sweetly, calmly, soundly
Must be then its last repose;
How dreamlessly, obliviously
Shall it rest from all its woes!

XXVII.

After rocking on Life's billows,
It shall hear no more their foam,
Sleeping upon Death's soft pillows
In an unobtruded home.

THE OCEAN WORLD.

I.

DOWN, down among the dark'ning waves,
Many an eye-glance deep,
As sound as children in their graves,
The ocean world doth sleep;

II.

On coral beds so rich and fair,
Laved by the water's foam,
No spot can yield in earth or air
A home like that blue home.—

III.

Pathless and fathomless to sight,
As blue-roofed as the sky,
And jewel'd like a wintry night
When star-bound roves the eye.

IV.

Ever young, their gold locks gleaming
Like veils of light fall round;
And their sea-blue eyes are streaming
Like fountains without sound.

V.

All their day-dreams are of wonders
That every moon doth change;
And they breathe as one who slumbers
To music sweetly strange.

VI.

Never does Apollo harm them
With his fiery, noontide glow;
Every storm but sounds to charm them,
And rock their rest below.

VII.

The first moon-beams that stream upon
The waters of the night,
And turn them, where they gleam upon,
To shade of silver night;

VIII.

All their laughing eyes wide open
As if by magic spell;
And with voices sweetly spoken
They ring the long day's knell,

IX.

Then mariners far out at sea
Can feel strange ripplings there;
And, oars laid by, look wistfully,
Or breathe an anxious prayer.

X.

Ever while the waves are breaking,
Moon-kissed, on distant strands,
And the winds are darkly slaking
Their thirst in viewless bands;

XI.

Ever while the stars are holding
Their watch at heaven's door,
In each other are unfolding
Their strange unearthly lore;

XII.

These fairies of the under world
Through moonlit caverns stray,
Caverns that never have unfurl'd
Their richness to the day;

XIII.

Where the dark blue waves have slumbered
As in a tideless dream,
Ever since the world was numbered,
Or shone the first moon-beam.

XIV.

Now wafting to some shore unknown
The music of their song,
Or binding with a fairy zone
The sea they float along;

XV.

Now reaping from some shining strand
Jewels in countless heap,
Or building with a tiny hand
Their palaces of sleep.

XVI.

No sooner does a mortal fall
Within their liquid home,
They come as at some funeral call,
How far soe'er they roam;

XVII.

And bear him on the glassy wave
As swift as lightning cloud;
And lay him in some coral grave
With white spray for a shroud:

XVIII.

And every moon their silv'ry tears
Fall on his bier again,
Till all of earth that's left appears
Some rich gem of the main.

THE VOICE OF POESY.

NATURE has many harmonies! She has
The loud, far-booming thunder, deepest
lung'd;
She has the liquid melody of streams,
Far softer than the softest fall upon
A dying lyre of a milk-white hand;
Her breeze is laden with a tale of love;
Her skies with music echo all around,
Music well nigh as rich as the fine song
With which the Angels fathom their own Heaven.
For ever pours Her Spirit-peopled wind
Mysterious mournings into midnight's ear.
Dark Ocean is her organ most supreme;
Its mighty billows moaning round the world
Seem like a *lava-flood* to shadow forth
Eternity's *eruption.*
Nature's organic, universal frame
Trembles with unutterable Knowledge,
And speechless Prophecy—and yet there is
Even among Her worshippers a voice,
One voice far more impassion'd than her own,
Sublimer far in its prophetic Strength,
And inspiration spiritual than all
These her majestic harmonies—it is
The voice of Poesy!—

SUMMER'S RAIN.

I.

THROW wide the house-door, now! for who
at Home,
After the falling of this Summer-rain,
Would stay? Confinement is a very pain
When Nature bids us all abroad to roam;

II.

Abroad into that Garden which belongs
To all Eve's children, where with tear-lit eyes
They can recall their Mother's Paradise,
And think they hear indeed their Father's songs.

III.

The Sun has burst his prison bars—a Cloud!
And shines in all his glorious liberty,
Painting the merry earth so radiantly,
It almost seems as if it laugh'd aloud.

IV.

The Cloud has gone! Vain, foolish thing to think
She could the Sun for any time have veiled!
Ah! no—she has but to the far-hills sailed,
And gathers her white folds upon their brink.

V.

Dear Cloud! it may be that the Godlike sun
Was to thee dear as to the earth below;
And from thy arms thou would'st not let him go,
Weeping his loss as any child had done.

VI.

For now within thy cradle of blue air,
Wearied with tears, thou seemest fast asleep;
And never in thy fleecy breast to keep
One dream, child-like, of thy late, sunny care.

VII.

There is a sense so manifest of bliss
In Earth—Air—Sky, that even to draw breath
Is beautiful—a counterpoise to death,
Only to witness such a scene as this.

VIII.

All things seem cheerful as a happy dream;
With hollow laugh the hill-springs bubble up,
As if the rain from Jove's own nectar cup
Had pour'd, and sweeten'd ev'ry brook and stream.

IX.

So balmily the Zephyrs make escape
The fervour from my forehead and my cheek,
I almost look to see them in their freak
Of kissing me, resolve themselves to shape.

X.

A sweeter fragrance bursts from ev'ry flower,
Perfuming the soft breezes as they blow
Enamour'd round, and with a deeper glow
Blush their moist beauties at this liquid hour.

XI.

Alive with music are the groves around;
Such joyous Pæans pour from every throat,
That all the birds some new and fuller note
Seem at this very moment to have found.

XII.

A glorious shadow floats adown the hill,
A shadow of bright colours, gold and brown;
As if the rainbow had just glided down
Into the wood its sweet hues to distil.

XIII.

And there the lovely family of trees,
To me the dearest brotherhood of all,
Hang their green leaves as tho' they ne'er could fall,
Nor ever feel red Autumn's hectic breeze.

XIV.

And ever when apart these leaves are shook
Between, the blue interstices of air,
Sparkle as though some waterfall were there
Of which the foliage would conceal the look.

XV.

And jealously enamour'd would throw round
Impenetrable shadows o'er its wave;
And but for its sole happiness did crave
Alway to hear the lull of its sweet sound.

XVI.

So fresh and green the quiet meadows shine,
With kingcups and with daisies over-grown,
I long to roam there ever and alone,
Or lay me down among the sleeping kine.

XVII.

A deeper beauty glows o'er all this scene,
Which Nature seems not to have known before;
As if a new expression had pass'd o'er
Her changeful features, hitherto unseen.

XVIII.

As often brooding on a dear friend's face,
I've seen with sudden and with strange surprise
A shadow or a light within her eyes,
Which to the countenance gave a quite new grace;

XIX.

Or on her lips so clear and sweet a smile,
Its beauty quite enraptured me, and yet
It was the same that I had often met,
Though other thoughts would note of it beguile.

XX.

So glows the face of Nature at this hour,
It seems as if it never yet had rained,
Till this first day, and that she ne'er had gained
Such loveliness as now from this late shower.

XXI.

Oh rain! oh rain! delicious Summer-rain!
Would that the thought-seared leaves of my sad heart
Could from their early yellowness depart,
And be like Nature's fresh and green again!

XXII.

Oh that once more, and quickly if once more
I could return unto myself, and free
My heart from the dull weight of agony
That years and years have heaped up more and more!

XXIII.

Which never in mere words can be revealed,
Nor shared by others, for it is the blight
We breathe upon ourselves, and from all light,
Save God's clear glance, hold evermore concealed.

XXIV.

Thou coronated oak! how beautiful
In thy refreshing glory art thou now!
Since rain and sunshine on thy lofty brow
Has lately poured, and brimm'd thee to the full.

XXV.

With such a green and living purity,
And verdant vigour, that in thy sole look,
Pictured more truly than in any book,
I clearly read what I myself should be.

XXVI.

Ah once, thou God-crowned monarch of the wood!
Like thine a living verdure did I bear,
When I was free from that soul-blighting care
Which springs from knowledge of ought else but good.

XXVII.

When I could send my Spirit up on high,
Plum'd Eagle-like, and with believing wing
From the vast universe of things could wring
The truth of all I paint in poesy.

XXVIII.

But now my heart is like a sapless tree
Which bends itself beside a river's brink,
Within whose bole the waters rise and sink,
Making murmurs soft and melancholy.

XXIX.

Sapped *not by years but thoughts*, for my soul seems
From its first sense *like lightning* to have flashed
Through all Life's vain experience, and have dashed
On to its goal as we do in our dreams.

XXX.

Oh rain! oh rain! delicious Summer-rain!
Thou who re-gladdenest all the glorious earth,
Endowing all her beauties with new birth,
Hast thou no means to blot out sorrow's stain?

XXXI.

E'en for the blade of grass there is the dew,
And for the lowliest plant there are the showers;
The clouds all pour refreshment on the flowers,
Is there no rain for the sad spirit too?

XXXII.

Ah! neither from the clouds, nor from the dew,
Can we derive that spirit-soothing rain,
Which is to wipe away all human pain,
And Life's long-withered flowers alway to renew.

XXXIII.

But in the tears of mortal agony
Is consolation only to be found,
Which our sad Saviour pour'd upon the ground,
In the dark garden of Gethsemane.

LINES WRITTEN IN DEJECTION.

I.

OH Life! thou art so dreary,
So often Sorrow's rain
Clouds thee—my heart is weary
Of all thy doubt and pain.

II.

Oh world! I would that never
My Spirit had known thine;
Since with my youth together
Is fled each dream divine.

III.

Time! my footprints so have worn
Thy steps, that now I stand
Poorer than in thy gold dawn,
With more than empty hand.

IV.

For as when a Bird hath fled,
Air fills the vacant nest;
Hollow care, when Joy is dead,
Becomes with us a guest.

V.

From flames through brightly darting
As ashes cold remain;
So sweetest Hopes departing
Leave scars of actual pain.

VI.

Oh Poesy! thou Sunset
Eternal of the Heart,
Round me may thy bright hues yet
Linger and ne'er depart.

VII.

Grow not like all else untrue,
My sole surviving love!
But be thou an ever blue,
Heaven to me above!

VIII.

Winter bare are all the trees,
All without is snowing,
Still be thou a Summer breeze,
Round me ever blowing.

IX.

Steep! oh steep me in thy light!
Enrich me to the last
With thy beauty, and thus quite
Auroralize the Past.

X.

Life but for thee and thy balm
  Were bitter poverty;
Flood me with thy golden calm!
  Leave me not utterly!

XI.

Let oblivion in its shroud
  Fold my after story!
Still would I, like some rich cloud,
  Dying feel thy glory.

REFLECTION AT MIDNIGHT.

I STAND beside this old Cathedral tower,
And hear its iron tongue peal forth the hour
Of solemn midnight, while on yonder hill
The moonbeams glimmer beautifully still.
Around me all seems bathed in breathless sleep,
All save the breeze, the stars, and moaning deep;
While yet those echoes on the night wind steal,
Let me bow down, and in my spirit kneel.
But one hour more—and then hath fled the night,
But one hour more—then grows the morning light;
And yet my soul! what if this other day
Be never doomed to rise or pass away?
What if this hour, which but seems a link
Of one connected chain, should be the brink
And very gulf o'er which this moment yawn
The fearful shadows of an unknown dawn?
And even now the pinions were unfurled
In one wide blaze of the vast spirit world,
And God the great Avenger should appear?
Oh what an awful thought! Methinks I hear
Already Time's last agonizing shout,
And in its stead Eternity pealed out!

The darkening universe convulsive shake,
And all that sleep or ever slept awake!
A dreadful thought! The bravest spirit bowed
Would almost seek oblivion and the shroud.
But even now, while pausing on this shore,
A minute has passed by to pass no more:
Steal on ye nameless hours! Flow by, dark waves
That leave no other track but rising graves!
We mourn your course, but ask not for delay
For we are those who watch by night and pray.

A NIGHT THOUGHT IN SICKNESS.

I.

O FOR a joy ! a simple joy,
To give to dark nights sweet alloy,
The spirit rest;
A rain to moisten pain's dry dust,
Something to build upon, and trust
That we are blest !

II.

Something that has a happy tone,
Mere shadow from the sunlight thrown
Of waving leaf;
The matin song of some near bird,
In rich seclusion heard, and heard
For sweet relief!

III.

O for something fresh and calm,
Something that a gladd'ning balm
May in me wake ;
The feeling of a wind just blown,
Or hollow ripple o'er the stone
Of a still lake!

IV.

The sense around of something green,
A glance at a rich summer-scene,
Or forest tree;
An opening in the clear blue sky,
Something to speak of God's sweet eye
Bending on me!

REFLECTIONS SUGGESTED BY A VISIT TO KENILWORTH CASTLE.

MAGNIFICENT! Oh that our life indeed
Were but a moonlit reverie, or dream
Of summer beauty! and that it sufficed
With eye and lip and spirit to drink in
The heavenly calm of this resplendent scene,
And then that we for evermore became
Thereunto heart-assimilated, and
With a like glory inwardly endowed!
How wonderful the Poetry of Night!
Of such a night most passing wonderful!
Nor Sleep, nor Death itself can be more calm
Than the reposing Universe is now,
Which like a temple dedicated stands
To Silence the Divinity, as though
Silence and Eternity were one.
How like an Angel spiritually glides
The full-birth'd Moon, and never with her tread
The faintest echo over Heaven wakes!
The Spirits of the stars seem all asleep,
As though each one each orb with his own fire
Had fresh illumin'd, and then beacon-like
Had left them o'er the Infinite to shine,
While they lay dreaming.

Not the slightest breeze
Now stirs the slightest leaf upon the trees,
Which stands so statue-like as almost to seem
Endow'd with meditation, and to be
Lost in a flood of recollections grand,
And musings o'er the Kenilworth of old.

Thou glorious relic of the shadowy Past!
And symbol of far ages grown so dim
That but for thee and such as thee they would
Almost seem fabulous—such little trace
Does Time leave of his wand'rings upon Earth—
Thou Voucher most magnificent of all
The dark magnificence of other days—
To living warriors once the echoing roof,
And now their voiceless monument—as thus
In the still hush of night I gaze on thee
My heart is rocked to such a trance sublime
That thou dost grow unreal, and most like
A solemn picture with his hand that Time,
Dreaming of all his memorable years,
May've painted o'er in quite unconscious mood
The canvass evanescent of the air!

Of Mutability how strange a tale
Tell these old walls that even in the light,
And flushing beauty of a summer noon,
Look grey and ruinous, but dark'ned thus,
Into a deep solemnity by night,
Such memorable grandeur do they wear,

That as the moonbeams bleach them here and there
To silv'ry whiteness, and the ivy green
Turn to the tint of sorrow, I could deem
That Veneration in an airy shape
Dwelt here, and wand'ring o'er his hoary home
With the sad glance of his fine spirit eyes
The transformation beautiful had made.

The deep inaudibility of Time,—
The moon's bright watchfulness, and starry calm,—
The hush of Nature's pulses so complete
That all things seem—the trees and waveless grass—
The gleaming meadows, and the moon-lit kine—
And yon cloud-Arab of the desert blue—
Far less asleep, than in themselves to be
Most perfect symbols of a perfect sleep,
And in their hues of its strange-coloured dreams—
This memorable ruin breathing forth
Such melancholy grandeur as to seem
Rare Melancholy's own embodiment—
The ivy leaf that in the moon-bleach'd sward
Just falls and falling, in the moonlight sleeps—
And more than all that strange experience
Of bliss poetic that the heart feels most
When in apparent solitude it is
Full of its own communion to the brim—
All these, of this most beatific night
The decorations scenic, lend to it
Such overflowing beauty that, methinks,
In very faith the Spirits all must be

Of dear departed Poets come abroad,
Embalming with their rich influence the air,
And giving to their old Idol, the Moon's self,
Another halo, brighter than her own—
The halo of their fine companionship!

On such a night as this, on such a spot,
It were delightful to lie down, and let
Yon bright Enchantress bathe me in a flood
Of sweet romantic dreams; restore again
With her moonbeamy wand the glories old
Of fallen Kenilworth, and reawake
From their cold ashy slumbers the proud throng
Of Queens and Courtiers, Dames and warring
Knights,
That make magnificent its history.
And now already at the very thought,
I feel the waves of memory o'erflood
My moon-enchanted brain, and by me sweeps
Th' Elizabethan pageant, and I hear
The warder's trumpet echoing loud and clear,
The clang of hoofs, the rattling of steel arms,
The congregated shouts of jubilee,
The songs of festive, gorgeous revelry,
The mimicry of clashing tournaments!
On such a night too and on such a spot
It were a pleasing fancy to portray
Sweet Amy Robsart gazing at the moon
Through this same window, with her face divine
Flooded with tears, and with a quivering lip

Making her sorrows audible.

But yet, methinks, the very stars look down
Sadly reproachful, even as I let
These passing fancies glow upon the wing;
Since idle meditation is unmeet
For such a night, and such a scene as this,
The very essence of whose beauty lies
In its solemnity.
This melancholy ruin doth uprear
A brow too darkly venerable for dreams
Of mere romantic beauty, for thereon
Is writ the signet seal of *Mystery!*
It stands as a depository of that
Momentous secret which the plummet thought
Of blind Humanity has ever failed
To fathom and lay bare, and whose sole weight
Has flame-like scarred all thought-impassioned
souls—
The secret of that everlasting Change
Of Mortal state contrasted with the clear
And starry evidence of Eternity.

Therefore will I from this unravell'd scene
Draw higher inspiration than at first;
And as with a magnificent vast dial
Of Time before me, minuted by stars,
Will I of its strange flight avail myself,
While still that flight I feel within me pulse.
And never surely could a sweeter night

Give to the heart more sweet encouragement;
Nor resting-place more hallowed, nor more meet
An opportunity be hereafter found
To disemburden that one master grief
Which long has trembled on my lip, and which
Now to pour forth no selfish impulse is,
For it is all too general, and is shared
By every heart drawn upward unto thee,
O thou pale Spirit-mourner of the skies,
In their deep yearning for the beautiful.
And haply too occasion may me fail;
And soon, perchance unmemorized, I may
Sweep with the Death-wind onward, and, depart
Into that cold and unfamiliar night
Where no moon reigns: already now methinks
My steps resounding through the arch of Time,
Grow faint and fainter, and I seem to feel,
Through the unbarring portals of the Grave
The chill of Death's dark Kingdom, and to hear
The moaning echoes of that moaning wind
Which mourns at midnight over all the dead.

Oh thou bright Empress of this mortal sphere,
Whose palace is the midnight purpled sky,
Whose handmaids are the wind-wove clouds, and round
Whose silver throne the everlasting stars
Are the red flaming Janizaries! oh thou!
Who through the lapse of ages hast poured down
Thy radiance o'er the sleep-enchanted world,

A very Paradise making it to those
Sublimest Bards who in the days of old
Bowed down the knee to Nature, and to all
Who worshipped the Great Beautiful in thee;
Who with thy smile magnetic hast drawn forth
Divinest tears from eyes long closed within
The grave's all moonless night, and hast evoked
Most passionate adorings from warm lips,
Sealed long ago by the mute jailer Death:
Thou saddest orb! who imagest thyself
All Life's sublimity—with thy pale light,
Emblem of Hope and meekest Charity,
And Constancy and Faith heroical;
Oh glorious Moon! thou who for evermore
Hast been to all the wanderers of Earth
A type of love eternally serene,
Serene as thine own countenance—Oh Moon!
I too a mortal wanderer in turn,
By these majestic ruins, and beneath
Thy beautiful quiescence would upheave
My heart tide-like to thee.

Oh moon! full well thou knowest that mine all
Of thought, of passion, animation, love,
Of spirit and of soul-nobility,
Has been so bound to this green natural world,
My heart has panted like a summer wave
To mirror only its poetic life.
From very childhood has mine earliest love
Been thine most chiefly, and mine infant thoughts

Than the delighted clouds more eagerly,
Over the blue solitude have tracked
Thy loneliest wanderings. The stars have glanced
On my young eyes such recognition sweet
As made at once my heart leap to the faith
Of old Astrologers. For me the trees,
The fields, the flowers, streams and shadiest dells,
And all the green magnificence of Earth,
A most beloved brotherhood have been:
The grand sublimities of Nature were
My food most constant; and I've ever drunk
To such repletion her poetic breath,
And with Her universal sympathies
So harmonized my spirit, as to look
On life as one vast fellowship, and feel
Alone one aspiration to pour forth
The waves of all my being into love,
And overflow all sorrows of all hearts.

And bountiful has Nature been to me,
And with a love most prodigal returned
The love I bore her—For it ever was
Most full delight to live with her alone,
And breathe but in her dear companionship.
For ever was it ecstacy to me
To bask beneath the blue light of her smile;
To drink to overflowing the rich change
That all her seasons in each other poured;
To watch the green leaves budding in the spring,
Ripen in summer, or in autumn fall;

Delightful ever but to roam abroad,
And hearken to her rural melodies;
To lay me down with the reposing kine
Asleep in the warm meadows, and there watch
The clouds' rich architecture through long noons;
Or on the grassy margin of a pool
The floating destinies of an insect world.
In the most simple of her living forms
Sweet food for meditation have I found;
In all her rarer beauties a vague realm
Of spirits fine complexion'd as the hues
Of richest sunset, and in whose belief
Imagination revelling distilled
The balmiest ministry.—And oh indeed
An all-sufficing Heaven had been Earth,
A paradise, this rainbow-coloured world
If but to live were ever thus to live,
Zoned in a calm of innocent delight,
With not a thought of the vain world to set
The breezy temples throbbing with sharp pain,
Respiring but an atmosphere of love
For dumb creation and all human kind,
And with no worship but for God alone.

Alas! alas! these days are now no more;
And never in their matutinal glory,
And full perfection can return to me.

Oh Moon! how is it that this glorious world,
This Sun steeped world, which is a very well

Wherein the spirit fine of poesy
Could drink for evermore unsatiated,
Becomes so darkened with our gathering years,
And so profoundly voiceless to the heart,
There seems to be resoundless and quite lost
Some echo beautiful of former days,
And the full splendour of meridian light
Sunk to the haze of twilight?
Oh thou whose light is Nature's sweetest smile,
The sweetest and the saddest—wherefore should
Her most beloved spirit ever seem
To veil itself in shadow as we grow
Older ourselves in sorrow and in thought?
Oh why no longer to th' experienced heart
Is her sole contemplation happiness,
A full and perfect joy as heretofore?
Shines the bright Sun less sweetly than of yore?
Or with the old clouds vanished long ago
Has some rich glory faded to return
No more to future skies? Is the young Spring
No longer bud-delightful? Has Summer
Lost its green luxury, or Autumnal months
Their mellow-fruited crown? Ah, not indeed!
Great Nature does not change, but we alone;
For ever pure her crystal waters flow
And fresh and sparkling, and from our sole selves
The bitterness has come for which we mourn.
Still at Imagination's fount divine
The same intoxication would we drink
As in our morning prime, but all in vain;

No longer lends the disenchanted heart
Enchantment to the lips: now no more
Like an Arabian palace seems the world,
Peopled by Hope's sweet Genii: we have lost
The beautiful mythology of Youth,
The Heart's best satisfaction, and in place
Of that most simple and confiding love
Which bound us so to Nature that we seemed
To live her life in all things, we now come
To her for consolation, and the balm
Of green oblivion.
We have grown old in knowledge, old in pain;
Old in the dark experience of dark days;
That one eternal tide of Hope and Fear,
Which pulses through Humanity's vast sea,
Has given to the throbbing of our hearts
A moaning, wave-like, though inaudible.
Despair at lightning intervals has reach'd
Our spirits shaken in the storms of thought;
And scathed their majesty intellectual.
Losing in vain conjectures our weak faith,
The darkness of Futurity we feel
To be at times almost Ægyptian-like.
Life's dread conditions weigh on us, and we
In strangest meditation ever stand,
Musing o'er the *awfully Unknown*,
Till reason reels as on a giddy verge.
That everlasting Question—" Whither borne?"
For ever flames upon the tongue and bursts
The portals of our trembling lips as we,

Descend adown Time's torrent, and are hurled
Like leaves before a Blast Omnipotent.
An ever-living consciousness have we,
That 'twixt the glorious sunlight and ourselves
There moves a shadow like a settled cloud
Dark and unchanging; and we ever feel
Dissatisfaction hollowing the heart,
A sense of incompletion—a want
As of a crown to our imperfect Being,
Which not the green magnificence of Earth,
The boundless Ocean and the glowing sky,
The breeze, the flowers, sunshine, music, love,
The beauty and the poetry of Life,
Can altogether fill up and o'erflow.
We drink the glory that is shed around
Down from the starry Heavens unto us,
And, as we drink, discovering *what we are*
So deeply yearn to be *what we are not*,
The brightness of the Universe is dimmed,
And with our sadness half its glory veiled.

Who can drink in a breath of summer wind,
Or feel its freshness light upon the cheek,
And not repine that it should pass away,
And leave him only the sensation sad
That it has blown? At the still midnight hour
Who *painless* watch the bright-assembled stars?
Or from this narrow boundary shoot forth
His glance into th' Infinite, and as falls
Upon his finite being, like the sense

Of some immeasurable solitude,
Creation's vague immensity, not feel
An aspiration most intense upon
His everlasting Journey to set forth?
Who for the brief existence of a noon
Can build himself a home amid the woods,
A summer-foliaged home, and then return
Within his heart *completely satisfied*
With its sweet memory? the rich sunset watch
With heart quiescent as the quiet skies?
Or gaze upon th' illimitable sea,
Or snowy grandeur of an Alpine height,
And *nothing more* than admiration feel
At their sublimity?
Alas! Alas!
'Tis not enough for man to have alone
The sense of Nature's beauty, but he would
Be in *himself* as truly beautiful.
'Tis not enough that he should feel the wind
Blow freshly o'er him, but he also yearns
To be with it embodied, and to roam
On such a joyful wing for evermore.
Sweet though it be to gaze upon the stars,
Still are they clear reminders that he is
But a vain gazer, and as yet cannot
In their own liquid light participate.
The contemplation of unbounded space
And its unfathom'd glories, sharpens more
The sense of his imprisonment: the calm
Of Evening ever in sad contrast gleams

With Life's dark turbulence.
His summer bower
Is but the frailest habitation whence
To the blue skies he looks, and therein paints
A more enduring home. Each snowy Peak
Like a dread Spirit towers o'er his gaze
And beacons Heavenward; and as he stands
By the resounding Ocean, and away
Far, far away to the horizon sees
The waves more glassy and serene become,
His spirit heaves up to Eternity!

O Moon! this is the Sorrow of our Life:
This is Life's misery; and herein is made
Misery indeed in that it never ends
Till the last breath be drawn, and far away
Sails through the air the Spirit, and becomes
Invisible as th' Elements it loved.
Our aspirations so exceed our strength;
The heart's thirst is unslakeable for good;
And nothing but its shadow have we here,
A skiey mirage that allures us on
To plough for ever through Time's burning sands,
Which, grave-horizoned, we still fear may stretch
Onward, and illimitably on,
Till in a mad despondency we think
Eternity itself one wilderness.
Oh! far too lightning-like is life for all
The grand realities our spirits shape,
And oh, alas! too durable for pain.

For ever folding our cloud-harass'd wings,
We pine on the blue midnight to lie down,
Tented in peace, in balmy, liquid peace,
And yet with glorious labour would so crown
Our everlasting rest, that it may yield
A dream sublime!
We are in truth omnipotent, but in
Mere *will* alone, in *proof* most impotent:
And for such lordly spirits that would sweep
From zone to zone the Infinite, and still
Sweep ever onward, we indeed possess
Most perishable clay, and must appear,
Reflected in Eternity's clear glass,
Like foolish Phantoms whom the Death-wind soon
Shall prove most visionary!

Yet, oh! thou Spirit-wanderer of the skies!
Not merely this most melancholy strain
In idlest utterance to pour forth to thee,
Beside these glorious ruins have I couch'd
So long, thee watching. Now, even now,
A better theme thou teachest me than that
Of dark complaint o'er our fixed destinies:
And therewith I make end.

O time-enchanting orb!
Though long have flown the days when thou could'st pour
Thy beams on altars and on temples raised
To thee by old religion:—and indeed

Who would have fail'd to do so that had gazed
On thee with pagan eyes—though evermore
Is dropt thy silver bow, and fled for aye
The claim of the Divinity, Oh yet—
Yet never to thy worshipper of old
More fair and more beloved hast thou been,
Than ever unto me: for I have loved
Thee as a confirmation of the Book
Divine, and illustration beautiful:
All vindications glorious of the Faith,
All records of endurance wonderful,
Of life's heroic martyrdoms sublime,
All hopes, all sorrows, prayers and passions pure
That have a crowning Spiritual for goal,
All sweet Religion's promises in thee
Seem to me met, and clearly symbolized:
Thy tread so fine and echolessly soft,
Hushing the very air as if in pain
From each melodious footfall as it fell,
To poet's eye would credit thee to be
Some strain of erring Music that had lost
Its own harmonious sphere, and too divine
For its most utter loneliness, had thus
Itself into sweet light materialized.
Thou ever wanderest thro' the tranced hours
Of mystic midnight o'er this mortal globe,
Like the fine essence of Mortality.
In thee all past Humanity appears
To live again for ever, for the tale
Of all its aspirations beautiful

Breath'd in the unresounding ear of Time,
And ever through the unretaining air,
Thy pallid lips seem echoing evermore.
There is such startling chillness on thy brow,
As dwells upon the mortal countenance
Which Death has iced for ever, and thy smile
Is a most clear similitude of that
Which marks the latest sealing of its lips,
And though divinely beautiful, which still
Seems dashed with some indefinable shade,
As though indeed for suff'ring Man to bid
Adieu to grief for ever were a Joy,
And yet so holy and familiar seemed,
And of such melancholy fine, the face
Of parting Sorrow that its shadow still
Lingered and lingered with him to the last.
Down from thy midnight throne thou gazest now
Like some rich Spirit whom the ministering stars
And the cloud-winged Angels bear along
To its beatitude; and now indeed,
Now more than ever dost thou prove to me
That Life hath its sublimity, since now
Its holiest phase thou symbolest of all—
Its consummation.

Oh Thought divine! and Consolation grand!
Unction of wounded hearts! and Balm profound!
Not altogether futile is the breath
And exhalation brief that we draw now!
Man like the moon has his veil'd glory too,

And round his Spirit a like halo wears.
'Tis from our very weaknesses themselves
That spring the true sublimities of Life:
What state of greater Poverty is there
Than on the frailest tenure to hold all—
Pomp, treasure, power, contentment, health and love—
Making the cup of Life endurable,
Yet what more glorious than courageous Hope,
Of that far legacy the Spirit waits,
Its rich and safe inheritance above?
Of greater impotence what proof can be
Than helpless slavery to sorrow's sting,
And all Time's rude inclemencies, and yet
Than resignation what more beautiful?
What theme with fear so pregnant as our bare,
Coffin'd, and cold, and desolate farewell
From the green valleys of the world, yet what
Problem than Resurrection so sublime,
Or mirage half so wonderful as that
Which vivid faith at its departure draws
Of that far distant, oriental Land,
God-sunned more brightly than meridian climes,
That Land of palms and fountains—Heaven-land,
And which She dies regarding?

Oh, Life is affluent in sublimity!
Thou heart despairing mortal, who with brow
Uplifted to the mystical bright stars,
Standest by this vast ruin, wailing o'er

The darkness of thy destiny—look again!
Through all its gaps though louder than the blast
It mocks at earthly durability,
Still to the *heart* does there not seem to be
A shadow lingering as of grandeur round,
Of human grandeur so impressive that
The very air itself seems rarefied?
Moon-hallowed thus, almost does it not breathe
The breath of actual sorrow in its self?
As if to be the Sepulchre of Man,
His desolated monument, and sole
Convincing evidence to after time
Of all the ruined majesty of life,
Had been enough to give the very walls
A dim perception of their glory lost,
And even to the waving ivy leaf
Emotion mournful as it coyed the wind,
Some intuition melancholy of
That secret unrevealable which gives
Its dark entwinement grandeur, and alone
Existence beautiful!

Despairing heart!
Though all the stones of this vast crumbling pile
Tell with oracular and solemn voice
That *Mutability* o'er all things here
Is sole, enduring Victor—comes there not,
Hushing thy spirit to its very depths,
A loud reverberation back again,
As from departed generations sent,
To tell thee too their disappearance was

A vanishing sublime?

Oh, weep no more!
Oh never mourn that all things change and change,
Since grand as martial funeral of those
Who die victorious, is the onward march
Of Life and Time to their completion.
The Glory of the World is its Decay;
The Grave itself is its chief Poetry;
Its monuments most beautiful are those
Which tell with voiceless eloquence of that
Sublimest of all human mysteries—
Man's everlasting farewell from the world
The Pyramidal Sepulchres of Kings
And sand-o'erwhelmed Sphinxes which remain
Alone of Egypt's history; the green mounds
Which raise for desert Babylon a voice;
The Cromlechs of the old Phœnician race;
The porticoes of past Philosophy;
The shattered marbles and the grass-strewn stones
Of Attic temples, where the spirit dwelt
Of old religion, and which still appear,
Grand in their desolation, to reclaim
Continual worship; Rome's Coliseum;
Pompeii's grave, and the dark Catacombs;
The moss-grown Palace, and the ruined Tower
Through whose grey chinks peers holily the Moon;
Tombs, statues, paintings, obelisk and vase—
All these, the sad mementoes of the past,
Who with their hoar survivorship appear
To mock their founder's dust, and stamp the World

With the vain seal of Mutability,—
These are the very sources from which rise
The thoughts that must eternalize the heart!
These are the fountains fine of Poetry!
These the very decorations whence
Springs chiefly the World's glory, and which shed
Historic rainbows o'er the arch of Time!
These are the urns magnificent which hold
Treasures of profoundest meditation!
And these the sacred *Meccas* to which come
All after-Pilgrims, and beholding there,
How even this existence mutable
May crown itself with grandeur, therefrom draw
The consolation beautiful that Life
In its *completion* must be most sublime:

Oh Life is affluent! Life is rich in Hope!
Nature's excess of glory which would seem
To stamp us by comparison most poor,
Shadows a glory more excessive still,
A world of glory Spiritual, to whose
Attainment in a far futurity,
Our emulative spirits she provokes.
Diviner than all joy is Human grief,
The grief o'er imperfection that bewails,
For of Perfection it is evidence.
The darkest of Life's accidents, which make
The darkest of our sorrows, are but proofs
That consolation balmier is at hand
Than the most bitter pungency of Grief.

Each boundless impulse that the Spirit feels
To be for ever free, are swayings all
Beneath a Breath omnipotent, which soon
Shall bear us onward far beyond the bourne
Of Earth and its impediments. All Hopes
And Aspirations holy evermore
Spring upward like the pyramidal flames,
Ever pointing to their own fulfilment.
For ever onward soar the wings of Time;
Its moments are like temple stairs, and lead
Up to a mansion glorious, whose vast domes
And Alpine pillars shroud themselves within
The snow-white radiance of Eternity!
The floods of past Humanity have swept
These altar-stairs, and some have left behind
A faint memorial of their upward race:
Saints, Martyrs, Heroes, and such Hearts sublime,
The founders of Religion, and the old
Teachers of pure Philosophy, have dyed
These steps to a red agony, which all
Succeeding Ages, as they mount, renew:
Yet with their lost mortality is gone
The truth and whole reality of all
The Spirits had endured of mortal ill;
Evil to them is evil now no more,
Since they have pass'd beyond its sufferance;
Their *Good* unto Posterity remains;
With them their *Glory* has ascended home;
Their *Victory* is an everlasting one.
And as with them, so is it with all those

Who bear the palm of suffering in hand,
And, now or afterward, the steps of Time
Mount with an upward brow.
Our mortal Life
Is but a battle brief and most sublime,
Sublimer far than the Titanic war,
Upon a theatre most magnificent;
And Death itself a Coronation grand—
A voiceless Angel, who for his sole pomp
Kisses the brow victorious, and there prints
With his cold lips, *One only Symbol—Peace!*

A LAST WISH.

ONE dying want I feel—take me to the casement,
And let my last sight be the glorious South;
I long to have the rich supreme contentment
Of feeling its warm breezes round my mouth
Play like a wind from Heaven. Could I but die
With one delicious foretaste of thy clime,
Sepulchre of lovely Poets—Italy!
My spirit would dissolve and fade away sublime.

TO M. M. F.

I.

FEW Souls are born to win a name,
And culminate to starry fame;
These are the Spirits of each age,
Whose deeds and passions in Life's page
Blazon eloquently.

II.

But many who now seem sublime
Through the dim telescope of Time,
If stript as naked to the sight
As frost upon a wintry night,
Would shine less gloriously.

III.

And there are those who leave no tale
On Earth, but one dark mourning veil
Through uncomplaining years have worn,
And in their inmost hearts have borne
Sorrow resignedly.

IV.

They live unto the World unknown,
Communing with their souls alone;
And pass from earth and all around
Without a single sigh or sound,
Dying contentedly.

V.

Like clouds that in a desert sky
Set, unobserved to mortal eye,
Little needing after-story—
Rich in their own inward glory,
Fading beautifully.

VI.

Beloved friend, reflect how great
It is to meet with such a fate;
To struggle, earns a skiey calm,
From sorrow springs our real palm
Life's true nobility.

SONG OF THE ANGELS.

I.

THE Angels of God, we spring from the rays
Of an eternal fire;
We know not the end nor rise of our days—
God only is our Sire.

II.

From the gates of the day on Meteor wings
We span the waves of space,
And gladden far worlds with the joy that brings
News of an infant race.

III.

Far behind us we leave the lightning's track,
The comets dazzling hurled;
No glance but God's own can recall us back,
Or match our wings unfurled.

IV.

We soar where the glittering spheres are hung,
The Islands of the morn,
Where day throned on day eternally young,
Brightens from dawn to dawn.

V.

Where planets and worlds in their torrid beam
Millions of suns out-glow,
And clustered together to mortals seem
Like a faint starry bow.

VI.

And yet where apart like a globe of dew,
Each in its light alone
Breaks as it ploughs thro' the Infinite blue,
The stillness of the zone.

VII.

With Music so piercingly sweet and keen,
That with our Angel sight,
We trace it afar like a billowy sheen,
Melting around its flight.

VIII.

We soar and we soar till our swift race run,
The last orb rounds its bars;
Then we seek the grave of the setting sun,
Our beacons the pale stars.

IX.

There in the depths of those soft dying beams,
We bathe each cloud-kissed wing,
Till its rim dips down, and over it gleams
The pale Moon's slumbrous ring.

X.

Like the Queen of the sea—th' amber-lit sea,
She bursts upon the world;
And we like her Genii, wherever she flee,
Follow with wings cloud-furled.

XI.

Over the valley, the field, and the town,
Over the glimmering wave,
We follow the Moon and with her look down
Upon each quiet grave.

XII.

Hid in the pearl-like clouds we tread
Over the Mountain's rim,
And chant as we pass the seats of the dead
The resurrection's hymn.

XIII.

And the seas before, all restless and wild,
Heave with a pleasant sound,
And each lake beneath like a dream-bound child,
Smiles as it murmurs round.

XIV.

Over the whole globe's fairy-like scene
We glide with down-bent face,
Till we mark some spot where never hath been
Of sinful man the trace.

XV.

And there we descend with breeze-sounding wing,
Watched by the Moon alone;
And her smile grows sad as she hears us sing
Far from her lonely throne.

XVI.

There in a mount-girded, palm-shaded land,
Imparadised we roam,
And talk of the years when our glorious band
Made the young Earth its home.

XVII.

When not only he whom pillowed on stone
We comforted in dreams,
Did see us, but others by daylight have known
The brightness of our beams.

XVIII.

And oh! how we yearn the time would come round,
When we might speak once more
To our brother's sealed ears the same sweet sound
Of love as long before.

XIX.

But long in the skies ere the pale, pale moon
Has faded like a Ghost,
Our dew-dripping wings we shake, and are soon
Lost in the starry host.

XX.

And only the zones of limitless space,
Bournes to our flight are;
And they ever more as we in our race
Travel from star to star.

XXI.

The cycles we live like ring beyond ring
Of brilliant rainbows arch,
Eternity's Heaven and fresh ever spring
Upon our onward march.

XXII.

These rainbows are spanned by memory's glow,
And never fades their hue,
For our hearts are like wells whose fountains flow
The same, yet ever new.

XXIII.

And thus though the breath has long since flown
Which rosed our lips when young,
All loves of the past are to us re-known,
All hymns again resung.

XXIV.

Yet often and oft in our glorious flight
We turn to Earth anew,
And secretly haunt it in the Moonlight—
Man's Saviour loved it too.

XXV.

And when at the last our Angel fires
Quiver and yearn for rest,
We tune by God's smile our love-breathing lyres,
Pillowed upon His breast.

XXVI.

We sing and we sing till our voices seem
Souls of their own to gain,
And we fall asleep in a deep deep dream,
That echoes our Song again.

XXVII.

We dream and we dream in our spell-bound sleep,
Nor hear the Spheres go round,
Till we wake to strains so divinely deep,
All sense is lost in sound.

XXVIII.

We wake to the swell of a star-pealed chime,
Ringing at Heaven's gate;
The glorious dawn of a phase sublime,
A young creation's date.

XXIX.

Whose far flashing orbs roll wave-like in sight,
Quiring their infant hymns,
And spirits upsprung like pillars of light,
Peer from their golden rims.

XXX.

Then spreading our wings like the clouds that
surround,
And catch the sunset's fire
Again, for the bars of the day's utmost bounds
We sail until we tire.

THE LAST DREAM OF YOUTH.

I.

THE shadows of night were falling with might,
Spreading a pall around;
The Glories of Earth, so famed in their birth,
Had passed without a sound.

II.

Its green spots so known, they seemed all his own,
In fancy's brighter day;
Tho' round him they'd clung and his brief life won,
Were flitting far away.

III.

Bright dreams had he seen, that perhaps might have been,
Had he attained his prime;
Of honours well won in the race men run,
And that ennoble time.

IV.

Of many a deed that should be the seed
Of some great human good;
Of youth greyed to age, up to the last stage
Spent as a Christian should.

V.

But these had fled all, and a sterner call
Had made life's music dumb;
Visions of summer had closed for ever,
And death's dark winter come.

VI.

And there as he lay, the moon's holy ray
Shone like a message through;
And his eager eyes, upturned to the skies,
Travelled the starry blue.

VII.

He lay with the sweat of agony set
Upon his temples now,
And with cheek as pale as the clouds that sail
Over the Moon's bright brow.

VIII.

But like that fair orb no cloud can absorb,
He kept his martyr smile;
Till something like sleep, as calm yet not deep,
Freed him from pain awhile.

IX.

Then in a half dream did his spirit seem
Breasting the clouds to rise;
While o'er him there leant, as his Guardians sent,
Denizens of the skies.

X.

Their melodies fell like a homeward spell,
And sweeter round him grew;
And from the far sky as in soft reply,
There came a welcome too.

XI.

Like streams of gold light their deep eyes flashed bright
Through the blue folds above;
They seemed to his heart, as of memory part,
Shadows of early love.

XII.

The stars in their sphere peered forth far and near,
Each from its shining bound,
And appeared to sleep on the azure deep,
So calm the void around.

XIII.

And fast as they sailed, worlds quivered and paled,
Millions of dazzling rings,
That mocked the sun's blaze, like a rainbow haze,
Gleamed through those Guardian wings.

XIV.

And climbing the sky like lightning sped by,
Lords of the Angel world,
Whose far trailing flight, resplendent with light,
Depth upon depth unfurled.

XV.

And floating along their ecstatic song
Came like a myriad strain—
So breathlessly deep, he longed but to sleep,
And never wake again.

XVI.

They sailed thro' the air into regions so fair,
Their plumes no ripple knew;
Winds Heaven-blending round their ascending
Softer and softer blew.

XVII.

Where so calm and clear shone each mellowed sphere,
That to his dream they gave
The beautiful sense of moonlight intense,
Filling the vast concave.

XVIII.

And now by the clime, that round him sublime,
And most celestial grew,
And by the rapt smile that the lips awhile
Curved of his angel crew—

XIX.

Voices unnumbered that, as he slumbered,
Seemed through the ether clear
To come like a breeze over summer seas,
Sounding more near and near.

XX.

He thought the land gained where Christ only
reigned,
The Canaan of his heart;
The home of the blest, whose Paradise rest
Had been his chosen part.

XXI.

When like a death-bound a pang sudden drowned
His senses all in pain,
Made the stars pale out, the depths rock about,
And all seem dark again.

* * * * * * *
* * * * * * *

XXII.

The shadows of night had fled with the light,
The Morn broke freshly through;
But the prayer and trance, and the Angel glance—
All were solemnly true.

XXIII.

For as the Youth slept, his fancy had kept
The Music of his heart,
And prophet-like flown where his soul alone
Was longing to depart.

XXIV.

Ere failed the Moon's eye to watch in the sky,
Or silver the green sod,
On death's happy car he'd passed every star,
And mounted to his God.

A RECOLLECTION.

I.

THE Human heart is like a well,
So deep you may not even tell
What fountains to it minister;
A tear is oftentimes as great
A mystery as shining star,
So darkly beautiful its fate.

II.

I do remember on a day
When summer breezes were at play,
And grassy insects ringing loud;
The earth around was passing fair,
The sky had not a single cloud,
And God's blue smile was every where;

III.

That strolling out with no intent
But to drink in with deep content
The balmy richness that was pour'd
From thousand living ministries,
And make for after time a hoard
Of rich unfading memories;

IV.

I chanced to spy through shelving nook
The glancing of a forest brook;
So soft and tranquilly it gleamed,
Philosophy's own chosen seat
To my poetic heart it seemed,
Or mythological retreat.

V.

The bank was paved with richest grass,
And every blade as still as glass;
Green were the trees around me; I
Loved most the time; the sky's bright dome
Looked blue as might an angel's eye;
The place was like a Poet's home.

VI.

And being such, I could but choose
To rest me there awhile, and muse
In what I thought would be a mood
Of tearless happiness, for there
Seemed nothing in the spot that could
Whisper the faintest breath of care.

VII.

And so upon the brink I lay,
And watched the waves in circles play;
So calm I felt, and tranquilly
Did every pulse within me leap,
I could have dreamt myself to be
In some Lethean isle asleep.

VIII.

I gazed and gazed with stedfast look
Through the clear waters of the brook,
And saw each wave-mosaic'd stone,
Stiller than cloud in summer air,
As though to all the world unknown
Reposing with its brother there.

IX.

Each pebble, like a dewy star,
Methought up flashed to me from far,
And downward beckoned me to come
And share the calm liquidity
Of its moist home, where all was dumb
Save the water singing sweetly.

X.

And as I gazed, and my fixed glance
Became more like a dreamy trance,
And marked the rainbow pebbles glow
Up through the wave more clear and clear,
I felt from my moist eyelids flow
A strange and meditative tear.

XI.

I cannot tell exactly why
The tear thus started suddenly;
It could not be the mere desire
To shape my thoughts—the solitude
Of all around—but something higher,
For I wished no one to intrude.

XII.

It might be that I found no balm
Within that wave, but that its calm
Had struck my spirit mournfully;
Yet why indeed should this be so?
Few derive aught melancholy
From merely seeing water flow.

XIII.

If grief I found instead of joy,
Then sorrow has most sweet alloy;
Never from that noontide after
Has been such pure emotion mine,
Even the sincerest laughter
Was pain unto that tear divine.

XIV.

I cannot fathom out the course
Of this untimely grief; its source
Is perhaps beyond all depth, and may
Be bound up with the breeze that blew
Its sweets around me on that day
From every herb and flower that grew.

XV.

And yet I'm half inclined to think,
As I lay musing on the brink
That tear out started from the thought
That though those pebbles glassed more rare
And pure a lot than Life, they taught
That Death a like repose might share.

XVI.

For hope came o'er me of release,
A wish to be with them at peace,
And let the rich moss cover me,
A gravemound making green and meet,
And let the wave roll over me,
Ever singing requiems sweet.

XVII.

Whatever made that strange tear flow,
This one thing only do I know,
A harbinger of secret good
It must have been when it was shed,
Or otherwise its memory would
Have long ago for ever fled.

THE NEW YEAR.

I.

THE old year's gone, another one
Has risen on our land;
And blithe and clear, in winter's gear,
It claims our welcome hand.

II.

Bells are ringing, Children singing,
In honour of its birth;
Hymns are stealing, Music pealing,
In Gratitude from Earth.

III.

But ere we yet as friends have met,
The eager race begun,
Let's all look back the old year's track,
And see what it has done.

IV.

What foot-prints there are found of care
For things that cannot last;
How it be strewn the old man's tomb
With shadows of the past.

V.

To each and all some solemn call
Has sounded from above,
As he stepped by the old man's eye
Glistened with shrouded love.

VI.

Some hopes are wrecked, that pride once decked,
Engulphed amid the sand,
And now we raise our clearer gaze
Up to a better land.

VII.

The child we'd reared, years had endeared,
Has left us with hearts sore,
And gone to brave the world's rough wave,
As we have done before.

VIII.

Some hands are cold we grasped of old,
In sorrow as in mirth,
Some mounds are green we may have seen
Heaped with the fresh turned earth.

IX.

So this Year's wave has found its grave,
And joined the billowed past;
Another one swells in the sun,
And drives us onward fast.

X.

Ere we set sail lest our hearts fail,
If storm or death come nigh,
Let us begin and cleanse our sin,
Repent us ere we die.

XI.

Forgiveness true extend anew
To all who've done us wrong,
And mercy ask if hard the task
That we've to bear along.

XII.

So when we reach death's sunless beach,
The shore where all must come,
And human fate or soon or late
Must all be dark and dumb!

XIII.

Though our barks may break and decay
As others have before,
Yet we shall be far yon the sea,
Becalmed for evermore.

THE LAND OF SLEEP.

I.

O SLEEP! thou soother of all mortal care,
The only veil save Death to human pain,
In thy mollescent arms come, fold us now,
Thy star-lit chambers leave without delay;
And on the care-worn, overaching brow
Thy cold and dew-distilling fingers lay;
For long has waned the daylight's anxious reign,
And see! the moon has risen once again,
And shine the tranquil stars through the blue, liquid air.

II.

O Come! and with the magic of thy hand
Unbar the portals of some gorgeous dream;
Roll thy calm ocean round us without foam,
And from the boundless treasures of thy mine,
Haunted by dark-eyed elf and fairy Gnome,
Upraise for us some dwelling-place divine;
And as we glide on thy Lethæan stream,
And on our sealéd eyes all thy wonders gleam,
O lead our spirits down to thine enchanted land.

III.

A land where fountains ever fresh are springing,
And falling ever in melodious showers;
A land of emerald richer than all gems,
Where all the air is echoless to sound;
And the dark poppies hang their languid stems,
And shed narcotics on the air around;
And all is moonlight, and through balmy hours
Rich birds are slumb'ring alway in their bowers,
And in their slumbers evermore seem singing.

IV.

A Land within whose boundaries once more
The fables of our childhood live again,
In all their beautiful, poetic glory,
That long ago within our nurseries rang;
Each marvellous, Asiatic story
That of the Palaces of Genii sang;
And the old Fairies reassume their reign,
And with their chariots all the bright clouds stain,
And earth is all repeopled with legendary lore.

V.

A Land where once more we all meet arisen
From the dark Grave, and lovely as of old,
The lost companions of our freshest years,
The darling sister and the tender wife,
And Her whose fond smile chased our first-shed
tears,

And Him who calmly watched o'er our young life;
And there their hands familiar do we hold,
And once more to our dreaming hearts we fold
Their shadowy forms as tho' we were in Heaven.

VI.

And there within that calm, quiescent Zone
Where all is deep repose and liquid rest,
Lost in the strange enchantment of our dreams,
And by the shadows of the moonlight led,
We wander on by clear, Elysian streams,
And hold sweet converse with the lovely dead;
While care is driven from our aching breast,
And with the World's oblivion we are blest,
And roll the waves of Time without Life's fretful moan.

VII.

Then O thou balmy and delicious god!
O downy Sleep! come from thy star-light dome;
Come! for vain and sorrowful our days,
And fleeting is the happiness we know;
And out of all the lovely things we raise,
We soon discover that *dark shadows* grow,
And pining and unsatisfied we roam,
For ever seeking a far brighter home,
And find no rest save thine till we're beneath the sod.

PRAYER.

I.

PRAYER is the loveliest gift from Him
Whose gifts are from above,
And like the holy cherubim
Breathes only but of Love.

II.

It frequents neither sounding dome
Nor convent's lonely cell,
It hath no secret haunt nor home
Wherein it loves to dwell;

III.

But like the Sun's vast flame it glows,
A Universal beam,
And all the wide world overflows,
A Paradisal stream.

IV.

In words of unison that greet
Another's happiness,
In tears of sympathy that meet
A brother's loneliness.

V.

When turn from earth our wearied eyes,
Wearied with all its crime,
And gazing on the starry rise,
Yearn for their rest sublime.

VI.

As may lean upon her brother,
A sister growing weak;
As may cling unto its mother,
An infant that would speak;

VII.

When thus to Nature we draw near,
And bend to her alone;
And pour out every secret fear,
Before her secret throne;

VIII.

And by her beauty feel becalmed,
The beating heart's unrest;
And ourselves as if embalmed,
Within her loving breast;

IX.

In those tides of holy feeling
That swell on every heart,
When the *Spirit's self* is kneeling,
And cannot *act* a part;

X.

Though indeed our deep emotion
Breathes not in chorussed praise,
Still our silence is devotion
As pure as we can raise.

XI.

Yet Prayer within the silent heart
Should never dwell alone,
But fountain-like should gush and start
In audibly sweet tone.

XII.

As any spirit of the skies
Or Denizen of light,
Must show itself to mortal eyes
And flash upon the sight;

XIII.

Ere we tell how wonderful
Its living form may be,
How glorious and how beautiful
Its bright reality;

XIV.

So Prayer should dwell upon the tongue,
And through the eyes gleam too,
And live in every act that's done
Ere we can deem it true.

XV.

This Angel of the world doth keep
His vigils most with those,
Whose tears flow even in their sleep,
And cares know no repose.

XVI.

He passes through your open door,
Ye poor and burdened throng,
And gleams of brightness on the floor
Sheds as He steps along.

XVII.

For though ye toil the life-long day,
And toil, and scarce know rest,
Deem not your life can pass away
Unblessing or unblest.

XVIII.

In care for those God bids you care,
For children or for wife,
In bearing all he bids you bear
You act the prayer of Life.

XIX.

Dear God! it seems most pitiful,
A strange and wondrous sight,
That any gift so beautiful
Should not be used aright;

XX.

And that because we little know,
Bound to this stage finite,
And clouds surround us as we go,
Our journey through the night;

XXI.

We should pursue vain theories,
With clamour and with strife,
Omitting those sweet charities
That are the gems of Life:

XXII.

And wrangling in a senseless mood,
Our hearts with anger stain,
Forgetful of our brotherhood,
And common lot of pain!

XXIII.

When alone to the departed
Are mysteries made clear,
And chiefly to be comforted
Humanity needs here.

XXIV.

The simplest words of Christian love
Are far more eloquent
Within His ears who sits above
Than any argument.

XXV.

And palms outstretched in charity
A holier sight is still
Than hands upraised despitefully
To work their erring will.

XXVI.

And all who help frail Humankind
Christ's cross to bear along,
In after-death can never find
Their life of Love was wrong.

THY KINGDOM COME.

SAVIOUR, we thank thee for the care
That thou to us hast shown,
By leaving that one simple prayer
Which we have called thine own.

A prayer so beautiful—its name
Is like a prayer in brief;
And could but come from Him who came
To give the world relief.

By which the wise and simply good,
The erring too may call;
The world may kneel in brotherhood,
And one may pray for all.

But mostly, Saviour! do we prize,
Of that one prayer—one part;
By which we pray for Gospel-rise
On every human heart.

The shining of thy Father's face
On all who seek the light,
The dawning to the human race
Of Day upon the Night.

The time when every troubled stream
Shall to a calm sea flow,
And all shall break this painful dream
That all dream here below.

O well thou knewest, to whom best
Was known the mortal lot,
That this one part mid all the rest
Should ne'er have been forgot.

But like a guide that's gone before,
A Night-set company,
Thou'st whispered words which ever more
Shall for a watchword be.

By which through every change of time,
Whatever clouds may frown,
All from this vale the hills shall climb,
And meet upon their crown.

Then Travellers of this same road,
Pilgrims to this same sea,
Faint not beneath your measured load,
Whatever it may be.

But when you say " your Father's will
Most cheerfully be done,"
Remember too He lets you still
Pray that His Kingdom come.

FIRST LOVE.

I STOOD beside her lonely grave,
In pensive sadness lost;
While sunset lit each sparkling wave
That to the shore was tost.

While beaming like some fairy land,
The west peered through the trees;
And zephyrs in a merry band
Danced in the evening breeze.

While the mellow light came streaming
From window and from tower;
And the rough old tombs were gleaming,
As though they loved the hour.

While the bird flew by on tired wing,
To seek its distant nest;
And stillness was every thing,
Hallowed as churchyard rest.

'Twas then *She* seemed to come again
Along with Eventide;
Her form once more across the plain,
Like fairy thing to glide.

And her shadow still seemed falling,
With beauteous things around;
And her spirit to me calling,
In well-remembered sound.

'Twas 'neath a sky as bright as this,
When the day's work was o'er,
We met to talk of bridal bliss,
And happy days in store.

We watched together the moon rise,
In yonder shady lane;
And when it silvered all the skies,
We vowed to meet again.

How could I dream that vows like these,
Their depth God only knew,
Were empty as the passing breeze,
And never would come true?

Such life was in her bright, blue eye,
Such beauty in her smile,
The sun seemed lingering in the sky
To gaze on her awhile.

And when we did our last leave take,
I stood a long, long time,
To hear her merry laughter wake
A merry, merry chime.—

Which now to me sounds like the swell
Of some far falling stream,
Or as the tones remembered well
Of music in a dream.

Each evening when the sun was low,
And slanting o'er the deep,
And every beam rocked to and fro,
Seemed on the waves to sleep;

I've brought the simplest flowers that grew,
Scenting the hedge-rows wild,
And garlanded her grave anew,
She loved them like a child.

Though flowers wave above her now,
Her lover's at her feet;
She cares not who may love her now,
Or round her turf may meet.

This is the last time I shall stand,
And on these hillocks gaze;
Or see the church-clock's quiet hand
Shine in the sunset's blaze.

I must go forth alone—and then
Lands far away shall tread;
O! how hard it is to live when
Your heart is with the dead.

But every time I hear the wave
Of foreign oceans break,
I'll then remember round her grave,
These sister-billows break.

And when other climes are blending
Their sunset with twilight,
I'll dream Angels are descending
To visit her at night.

And still shall many a youthful face
Become for her sake dear,
If I can only find a trace
Of that which is laid here.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST, OR, THE FALL OF BABYLON.

IN TWO PARTS.

PART I.

" Belshazzar the King made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand."

Daniel, v.

BELSHAZZAR th' envied and adored,
Of all that host the greatest lord,
Sat throned above his festive board,
In pomp of station.

His heart was bursting with deep pride
As by him swept the living tide,
And bent to him on every side,
In adulation:

And, vassals to his sole desire,
The wisdom, might and martial fire
Of that vast Assyrian empire
Gathered at his feet:

And Beauty met his stedfast gaze,
Dazzling with its united rays,
And burning some sweet note of praise
From his lips to meet.

Their thousand flashed darkly bright,
Like starry lamps of cloudless night,
Swimming with pride and mixt delight,
As they circled round.

From earth up to the list'ning skies
Like notes of airy melodies,
So did their mingling voices rise,
In a mighty sound.

Upon Belshazzar's signal call,
His Queen and Satraps one and all,
Throughout that wide and roofless hall,
Adoration made;

To their Gods of brass and glitt'ring gold,
Of Silver, stone and iron mould,
As helpless, lifeless, and as cold
As the worship paid:

And then flowed the wine unbounded,
And the bowl was quickly rounded,
And song after song resounded
From that festive ring:

And they laughed at the Persian host
With the bitterest scorn and boast,
And full many a brimming toast
Drank they to their King.

Until Beauty's pride unbending
To her lips a smile was lending,
And the warrior's tale was blending
With the whisper'd love;

And the hours flew in rapid flight,
Winged by the lightning of delight,
And the stars deepened into night,
Silently above.

Then in the madness of his reckless soul
Belshazzar seized and drained the flowing bowl,
And to his nation said—
—" Our ancestors have swayed for years
This kingdom and this throne,
We'll cast away all slavish fears,
And rule a king alone.
Bring forth the golden vessels
Of the Jew's great Deity,
Since they to us have sworn
Vassalage and fealty!
Can Belshazzar's lips profane
This worshipp'd One of old?

Or his royal hand e'er stain
His consecrated gold?
And we'll drink with flowing brims
To the glories of this hour,
While the ruby liquor swims
Through our hearts with magic power!
All praise and adoration
To those alone we dread—
The Deities of our nation,
The Guardians of the dead!
Skill to read Time's pages
Unto our ancient sages!
Success and princely station
To the warriors of our race!
Warm love and admiration
To Beauty's matchless grace!
And everlasting dominion
To this great Assyrian kingdom,
Of which Belshazzar is the head!

Like Ocean burst asunder
To its deepest caverns under,
Was the shout that came and died;
Re-echoing through the hall,
Back from living wall to wall:
A thousand voices rose
To doom Belshazzar's foes,
A thousand tongues proclaimed
Belshazzar the far-famed,
Of Babylon the pride!

Again the theme resounded,
From mouth to mouth rebounded
Like a leaping, quenchless flame;
Till each pillar seemed to shake,
E'en their gods of stone to wake,
The high and vaulting roof
Of Heaven rent aloof,
And every shining sphere
All sounding far and near
Belshazzar's glorious name!

The vessels were brought in
And handed to the king;
To the Queen upon her throne,
In her beauty all alone;
To his concubines most fair
Jewelled to the richest glare:
To the pillars of his state,
And officers most great;
And to every one whose name
Or for war or mystic fame,
Or noble, princely station,
Dared claim, in emulation
Of his sovereign, thus to spurn
With the haughtiest unconcern,
As the idlest of all things
The King of Kings!

And never any yet I ween,
Such sight magnificent had seen

As shone upon that festive night,
So proud and arrogantly bright:
The Palace's resplendent glare
To their intoxicated stare,
Through all its vast stupendous fanes,
Flushed gorgeously like blood-red panes:
And all their gods of marble gaze
Seemed to the worshipper's amaze
Upstarting in this festive blaze,
And even to the human ear,
In a rich ecstasy of fear,
To make their very breathing clear:
And serpents of enormous size
Wreathed round each pillar, to the wise
Symbolical eternities,
Glared living with their sanguine eyes:
And with their blood electrified
By joy's elixir, and the pride
Of power almost deified,
Their bounding pulses, one and all,
Throbbed as with a strength immortal;
As if in very truth they were
Respiring some celestial air,
And throned among those brilliant domes,
And bright-emblazoned Spirit-homes,
Pavilioned in the clouds sublime
By the rich magic of the clime.

Uprose the first Belshazzar's Queen,
Smiling with most majestic mien;

And at her signified desire,
Each warrior with a heart of fire,
Satraps in their princely glory,
Counsellors and sages hoary,
And Beauty with an eye of flame
That put the very stars to shame:
And when Belshazzar this vast band,
Saw uprising, cup in hand,
From out his glorious canopy
He stepped like a Divinity,
And with lip above the rim
Of his goblet, to the brim
Filled and flowing down,
He looked on all his host,
And bade them his proud toast,
With one magnificent hymn
Crown, and crown, and crown!

Then there came forth a hand—a single hand,
Unheralded by sound;
Full fronting the King and his blasphemous band,
As they caroused around.

And a Spirit unseen its fingers made
Distinct upon the wall;
And characters strange as magic portrayed,
That were unknown to all.

And clearer and clearer these characters showed,
Burning with fiercer might;

Till like mystic fires through the hall they glowed,
Quenching each paler light.

They glowed and they glowed as if some strange
Was lurking in that glare; [Power
Whose orbs but now seen had throughout that hour
Kept watch intently there.

Belshazzar's eye became rooted as stone;
It changed as in a dream;
And he reeled like a madman from his throne,
Bowed by the awful gleam.

Not a word his quivering lips could speak
In challenge to the sight;
But the blood rushed back, and his tintless cheek
Was changed to marble white!

And his grasp from the cup fell suddenly down,
Powerless to its weight;
He looked like a spectral thing with his crown,
The mockery of state!

And his warriors they all turned ghastly pale,
They scarcely drew their breath;
And their iron hearts shrank within their mail
As at the touch of death.

And Beauty shrieked out as in deadly pain,
And drooped its head to Earth;
And some closed their eyes ne'er to look again
In agony or mirth.

The music was hushed on the sweetest note,
The cymbals were unrung;
And the song the passionate breath had just woke
Died on the lips unsung.

So suddenly deep and awfully clear
The hush that pall-like fell,
The stars as they rolled seemed in their far sphere
Thrillingly loud to swell.

The Angel of terror unseen had flown
Amid that revelling band,
And turned with his ice-like wings into stone
Each heart and upraised hand.

One moment more,
The first shock o'er,
Their hearts rebeat again;
And their blood back rushed,
And their cheeks deep flushed
With pride and manly shame:
And a quivering eye
Did each raise on high
In hope that all had dreamed,
Yet still the bright glare
Met their quivering stare,
To each one ghastlier seemed:
The warriors they all
Burst the speechless thrall,
And through the white crowd dashed,

And in a mailed ring
Encircling their King
The livid steel outflashed:
With cheeks pale with fear,
Yet still loud and clear,
Swore they that every foe,
Ere reaching the throne
Should hear their death-groan,
And mount o'er them laid low.

Belshazzar uprose like one from the dead,
His voice was most hollow and thin;
They scarcely could understand what he said,
Or believe it was their King.

With a wave of his hand he shook them off,
More in mockery than fear;
And bade with a smile of the bitterest scoff
His men of lore come near.

This is no thing, said he, of human might,
Or trial of earth's power;
There is a deeper mystery in this sight,
A God wakes at this hour.

Let our prophets the mystic letters scan,
If they can bear the gleam;
And by their wisdom let them if they can
Expound what it may mean.

The prophets all of Babylon
The writing stand before;
The seers, Magicians, every one
Renowned for magic lore.

Their locks with years are hoary white,
And piercing is their gaze,
By watching through the starry night,
And reading Heaven's page.

They stand within that ghastly gleam
Like patriarchal trees,
O'ersilvered with the moon's pale beam,
And breathless in the breeze.

They stand and stand, their eyeballs strain,
To make the writing clear;
They gaze and gaze, but all in vain,
Their wisdom fails them here.

The mystic scroll remains untold,
The hand's still on the wall;
No tongue its meaning can unfold,
Not one among them all.

And dark as the appalling tomb,
As deadly as the sense of doom,
The mystery seemed now;
And spite of all his hardihood,
The sweat of agony there stood
Upon Belshazzar's brow.

And is there none at last, he cried,
His heart convulsed with rage and pride,
In all this land no seer—
No one whose lore suffices him,
Whose glance with age is not too dim
To make this writing clear?

Are all our sages impotent,
And by this ghastly wonderment,
Reproved to childishness;
Whose eyes so long have watched the stars,
Careering in their golden cars
Through midnight's wilderness?

By these great gods that watch us round,
Yet utter not a single sound,
I vow that he shall be
The third in all this glorious state,
Who to Belshazzar reads the fate
Veiled in this bright mockery.

Again the prophets raise,
Up to the mystic blaze
A cold reluctant glance;
And once again they stand,
A mute and silent band,
As in a deathly trance.

And again Belshazzar's call
Rolled like thunder through the hall,

Bursting so terrifically,
So madly and so fearfully,
That terror's self seemed shrieking loud,
Appalled at its own agony,
And for the moment verily,
Before that trembling, cowering crowd
Impersonated visibly.
Again he cried, and once again
Endeavoured to dissolve the chain
That bound them in such deadly pain;
His cheeks had lost their pallid hue,
And deepened to a livid blue,
Yet still the angry foam was seen
Whitening his scornful lips between,
And like a lion in his ire
Still flashed his kingly eyes with fire,
As gazing on his seers,
He vow'd to drown in tears
His Kingdom for these fears,
If on that very night,
There stood not in his sight,
Some prophet who could tell
From whence that sign had come,
So mystically dumb,
From Heaven or from Hell.

No voice, no whisper, not a breath was returned
In answer to that cry,
Tho' each in the depths of his inmost heart burned
To break the spell or die.

But up to the stars like a death-pang it flew,
And then rolled back again;
And its echoes resounding like mockery grew
Of their mysterious pain.

And speechless as marble all stood, for despair
Had frozen every sound;
Their blood was like ice, and in their hollow stare
Life scarcely could be found.

On each other they glared like statues of death
Fixed to the marble floor;
It seemed through their petrified lips that their breath
Would never issue more.

And they looked with their cheeks all bloodless as
snow,
Bound in some demon thrall;
And the Palace itself with its ghastly glow,
One vast sepulchral hall.

As if by the magical dread of that hand
Had been worked out their doom,
And congealed for ever like a Phantom band,
They were to mock the tomb.

Soft as brooklet brawling
Through a summer dell,
Or a fountain falling
In its mossy cell.

Sweet as an harmonious
Greeting to the ear,
From a strain melodious
That we dreamt not near.
Like a young bird trembling,
Half afraid to rise,
In its first ascending
To the azure skies.
As a wavelet flowing
In a silent bay
That again falls ebbing
From the shore away;
So soft, so sweet, so faint on all,
Through the dread stillness of that hall
A voice stole suddenly, and died,
As if by its own fear belied.
The spell that bound them all in pain,
Was snapt asunder like a chain;
Drowned as in some sweet enchantment,
All turned in silent wonderment
To whence that fluttering voice did seem
To come to them as in a dream.
And lo! upon her jewelled throne,
Belshazzar's Queen stood up alone;
Pale as any waning moon
Vanishing at midnight noon,
Her lids ran o'er with brimming tears,
Her lips were white with voiceless fears,
And eagerly and half in doubt,
Were seen attempting to shape out

Some inarticulate murmuring,
A half suppressed endeavouring,
As if the deadly silence froze
Her words ere on the lips they rose,
And when those thousand ghastly eyes
Were turned upon her in surprise,
She fainted nigh from inward pain,
In daring thus to wake again.
By what her spirit wished was said,
That spectral host so like the dead,
But still by some inspiring dew,
Her voice into distinctness grew,
And like an angel comforter,
Thus spake she to Belshazzar.—

"O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed:

There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers;

Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.

Then Daniel was brought in before the king."

And now upon Belshazzar's ear
His thousand Lords that gathered near,
All breathless betwixt hope and fear,
Loud and full and awfully clear
Came this appalling prophecy,
The revelation of the mystery :—

Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin. This is the writing, O King! and this the interpretation thereof revealed to me, Daniel.

" The God who doth Creation hold
Within His hollow hand,
Before whose glance all worlds are rolled,
By whom all Kingdoms stand;

Who kept upon his throne thy sire,
The while he sought his face,
Until he fell beneath His ire,
The meanest of his race;

That God whom ye have all defied
With blasphemy this night,
Has marked thee in thine hour of pride,
And kept thee in his sight.

This last shall be thy crowning deed,
Thyself hast past thy doom,
Thy kingdom is given to the Mede,
Thy body to the tomb!

Within His scales thou hast been weighed,
And wanting found to be,
This very night thy debt is paid,
Prepare that God to see."

Not one faint sentence in reply
Belshazzar gave, but silently
He looked upon his warriors all,
That fill'd with bright array the hall:
Their every cheek gleam'd ghastly white,
And every single glance his sight
Met powerless with pale affright;
He looked on all his Gods around,
Expecting from their lips some sound,
But all like frozen sentinels
Stood speechless on their pedestals,
And with their giant panoply
Glar'd down as in cold mock'ry,
And thence at last a moistened eye
He turned up to the midnight sky;
The planets there were coursing clear
As they had roll'd from year to year,
Placidly and beautifully,
Eternally, unquenchably;
And as he looked, those bright orbs seem'd
As though with sadder light they beamed,
And at that moment their calm stream
Of joy to soften into pain,
And mourn upon the wreck sublime
Of Kingdoms in the gulf of Time.

PART II.

In that night was Belshazzar the King of the Chaldeans slain.—*Daniel* v. 30.

As wave breaks on wave,
Like a foaming grave,
Came the myriad brave
Of the Persian foe;
Through the brazen gates,
Like resistless fates,
Dashed their serried row.
The glittering spear and shield
Waved like a silver field
In the moon's mellow light,
And their eyeballs glowed like fire,
As they peered with fierce desire
Far through the dusky night.
Their massive iron tread
Shook Babylon with dread,
Onward as they rode;
And sounding far and high,
They raised their martial cry,
Like summons from the dead
To the spirit just fled
From its wrecked abode!

The Assyrians that night were gathered around
Their King in gallant show,
They waited in scorn and without a sound
The coming of the foe.

Though the throb of their beating hearts was seen
Heaving their gleaming mail,
And they stood beneath the moon's silver sheen
As silent and as pale;

Yet the tide of their blood rushed warm and fast
As neared the Persian horde,
And their lips were firm set, and vice-like their grasp
Upon the sheathless sword.

And Belshazzar in that last deadly hour
Stood noblest of that band,
Though the Kingdom was waning from his power,
The sceptre from his hand.

For the pride of a long and regal life
Was gathered in his eye,
And he'd sworn to be Kingliest in the strife,
And like a King to die.

And he knew though his soul that night should be
From Earth in battle hurled,
That a Nation's fall his knell would be,
His Sepulchre a world.

Like a clap of thunder
Burst the bars asunder,
The Palace-gate was won,
And a shout arose
From the lips of the foes—
Belshazzar's race is run!
In, in they dashed,
Sword with sword clashed,
The marble steps splashed
With blood like torrent rain;
Cyrus led them on,
Death to the coward one!
Whoever shall turn back
Ere yet upon his track
He's left a host of slain.

As the lightning's lurid light
Makes the dark skies at midnight
Like a gleaming wall,
So the wave of naked swords,
From those vengeance-breathing hordes
Flashed throughout the hall;
Then up to the stars ascending,
And with their bright lustre blending,
So calm, so clear and deep,
The battle's din arose,
With clash of sounding blows,
The triumph and the shriek
From the victor and the weak,
The deadly pang and throe
From the faint and falling low,

In one wild confused heap;
And many an eye that night,
Of far and piercing sight,
For ever in the thrall
Of Death's descending pall
Quenched out its fiery light;
And many a spirit fled,
On swift and startled wing,
To the confines dark and dread
Of that mysterious King;
While their bodies side by side,
Poured out life's crimson tide:
And never in that Palace more
Was heard the sound of revelry,
For the last cry was o'er,
The shout of victory!
And the Idols were dashed down
Without incense, without crown—
Dashed to the marble ground;
While the warm and bleeding clay
Of their worshippers mute lay
In heaps around.

As a billow rolls and breaks,
As the echoing sound it makes,
As a dream when one waketh,
As the night when day breaketh,
As a meteor through the sky,
As a fallen star from high,
Had Babylon's proud sway
In one night passed away;

This kingdom's greatest girth,
That measured nigh the earth,
Had shrunk from out its place
Without name, without space;
The theme of Adorations,
The Lord of thousand nations,
Belshazzar without shroud
Slept with the lowliest crowd,
Leaving for all his fame
But the echo of a name!

O Earth! then upraise
All thy tongues to praise
Him alone whose foundations
Suffer no such mutations,
Whose only pillows
Are eternity's billows,
Whom infinity's dome
But fitly can home,
Whose palatial pillars
Are the planets and stars,
Who from himself gives
All the life that lives,
To Himself retakes
All the breath he awakes;
And whatever comes,
Upheave Mortal thrones,
Rise worlds, perish suns,
In His mystic zones
For ever shall be
Immutably.

ROW BY MOONLIGHT.

I.

WHILE music comes stealing,
Along the waves borne,
And Angels are kneeling,
In prayer until morn,
'Tis a sweet thing to row
Adown the lull'd stream,
And to catch as we go
The moonlight's pale gleam.
Row, brothers row,
Upon her far track,
No matter where we go
She'll guide us back.

II.

While fairies are keeping,
Their revelries light,
And the wave is speaking
To the wave "good night!"
While dark trees are sighing,
As low night winds creep,
And mermaids are lying
In their caves asleep.

Row, brothers row,
Upon her far track,
No matter where we go,
She'll guide us back.

III.

Hark how the Abbey bells
Peal softly and low!
P'rhaps some sad tale each tells
Of the dead below.
Old faces are laid there
That looked on our own,
Beyond canker or care,
While we glide alone.
Row, brothers row,
Upon her far track,
No matter where we go,
She'll guide us back.

LIFE.

OUR life is but a circle, curtained in
By two unfathomed mysteries; all events
However sharp and angular they seem
But make a curving imperceptible,
And round us hourly to the grave wherein
We pass without foreknowledge as we came
In the parent womb.

ADDRESS TO THE RETURNING SPRING.

I.

O GLAD delight! the winter's hoar distress
And frozen sorrows melt from us; again,
Herald of Nature's crescent loveliness,
Spring, like a young Enchanter, comes to reign.

II.

To reign o'er us and with her kindling eyes,
Floods of increasing sunshine to pour down;
Blue cheerfulness to give unto the skies,
And to the gladdened Earth an emerald crown.

III.

See how she comes, and puts in gentle motion
The curious clouds that now seem fledged with wings;
And swimming now through some fantastic ocean,
As if they were the shapes of living things.

IV.

Feel how she comes! what freshness in her breath,
As if she'd met old Winter on his way,
And he had tried to chill into death
With a cold curse for melting his hoar sway.

v.

The laughing Imp! she recks not what he says,
But bids him journey to the frozen pole,
And throne himself on Icebergs while she stays
To give to all this a new life and soul.

vi.

Enchantress spring! the world at thy return
Weeps out its joy in most delicious rain,
Oh from thy magic and abundant urn
Come pour on it thy gold, saturnian reign.

vii.

O dear magician, come and quick the nurse
Of barren Winter turn to fruitful good;
In thy soft showery lap all germins nurse
Of infant Earth into sweet womanhood.

viii.

O come! rewake all feathered minstrelsy
In nested homes to the full flood of song,
And let the rivulet's liquidity
Flow once again and rippling laugh along.

ix.

Make green the meadows for the tender kine,
That they may feed their udders with increase,
And bask beneath a warm and tranquil shine,
And sleep in beauty and in rural peace.

X.

A childish generation unto thee,
O Spring, is looking for its playmate flowers;
All simple hearts for green felicity,
All pensive mourners for their shady bowers.

XI.

O come! build up the leafiness of trees,
And coronate old forest-kings anew;
And through all windings open to the breeze,
And to the prying of clear Heaven's blue—

XII.

Weave jagged darkness where the poet may
Lie down in utter solitude and ease;
And as the branches with their shadows play,
So tune his fancies to what mood he please.

XIII.

Come tender Spring, and be our sylvan Guide,
And lead us, love-companioned, to the home
Where merry Pan and all his Satyr tribe
Through woodland wilderness for ever roam.

XIV.

O come! and lead us onward to the time
When not a breeze shall vocalise the air,
And all things are enamoured of their prime,
And sleep upon the thought that they are fair.

XV.

When humming wings make drowsy melodies
Through flowery copses where the wild bee strays,
And streams flow by like liquid lullabies,
And sing us songs of childhood's vanished days;

XVI.

Or perfect stillness zones with magic charm
The rich reposing scenery around;
Or now and then from some elm-shadowed farm
To sweeten silence comes a lowing sound;

XVII.

When Morn is fresh and odorous with dew
And Noon is like a paradisal clime,
And clouds pavilion sunsets ever new
And make a Heaven of sweet Evening-time.

XVIII.

Come! hasten Spring, and day by sunny day,
Leaf after budding leaf, and hand in hand,
O lead us down to where we long to stray—
The gorgeous, rich, enchanted Summer-land.

THE POET'S FAREWELL.

FAREWELL! a long and sad farewell
To all I've lived to love;
For clearly now I hear the knell
That summons me above.

Farewell to the green Earth, that I
Have made my natural home,
And to its glorious canopy,
Yon cloud-pavilioned dome;

To the beautiful blue ocean,
Whose grand majestic sound
Ever filled me with emotion,
And impulses profound;

To the shells upon the smooth sand
Now lying thickly heaped,
That with a curious eager hand
I frequently have reaped.

For they with all their brilliant hues,
And labyrinthine rings,
Made speech to me of billowy news,
And many wondrous things.

Of caves beneath the moonlit-sea
That wind for evermore,
And stretch into infinity—
A gem-vermilioned floor:

In the cool arbours of the deep,
Of beings that alway
Disport themselves, and ever keep
Perpetual holiday.

Farewell to each romantic scene
Of summer pleasantness,
Whose mere remembrance has been
A well of happiness.

Unto the merry breeze that greets
My temple's fevered glow,
Reminding me of meadow-sweets,
And water's pleasant flow.

Farewell to all those tender ties
Endeared to me by time,
To those affections pure and wise
That have made life sublime.

To the spirit within me burning
Still with poetic flame,
And yet which is fast returning
To Him from whence it came.

That arched my span of earthly life
As with a rainbow hue,
And made its sorrows and its strife
Less burdensome and few.

Yes, open wide the window, child,
And let me gaze once more
Upon the brow of evening mild,
As I have done before.

And let me see those western isles
Wove by the dying sun,
And fancy there the spirit smiles
Whose earthly race is run.

And let me hear the billows break
Along the desert strand,
As, curling with a snow-white flake,
They form a beauteous band—

What their silver lips are speaking,
Upon their merry chase;
And dream that perhaps they're keeping
Some memory of my race.

Let me list to that old fountain
That gladdens the way-side,
Whose waters adown yon mountain
Most musically glide;

Cast one more deep and lingering gaze
O'er field and flood and dell,
My last look take at Nature's page
That I have loved so well.

Whose beauties e'en in childhood's time
My footsteps led astray,
Will lighten other eyes than mine
When I am passed away.

Then, farewell! and a long farewell
To all I've lived to love,
For clearly now I hear the knell
That summons me above.

THANKSGIVING.

DEAR Christ, Redeemer, Teacher, Suffering King!
My life—my love—my poetry—my God!
My all in all in this world, and far more
My all in all through all Eternity!
Thou truest Poet of this earthly star
Before whose heavy sorrows all our own
Should be unaspirated and most still,
Of my profoundly dark, chaotic heart
And Spirit chasm-like, sole Luminary,
This brief and final song of gratitude
I raise to thee,—oh hear me!
Would that it
Around the borders of thy star-gemmed throne
With Oceanic murmur could upheave
And swell round thee for ever! And oh that
The shadow from Life's dial could go back
For me too, as for Hezekiah—then
Themes far more eloquent than ever yet
I've undertaken will I consecrate
To thee in future years:—but not with this,
Even with this deep yearning will I not
Debase this song of praise; and in that Thou,

Prolonging to an unexpected length
My vainly fevered days, hast let me bring
This volume to a close, I am thereby
Rejoiced and most contented; whether now
Poetry's delicious season shall again
With all its summer sweets return to me,
Or ever more my Babylonian lyre
Shall rest all silent on the willows—still,
My heart is wed to gratitude and Thee;
I have not breathed, thought, sorrowed quite in vain,
My life has been productive of some fruit
Whose sweetness may not perish.

FINIS.

C. WHITTINGHAM, TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE.

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